

Window on Jordan

Tawjihi and shooting in the air

By Ilham Sadeq
Star Staff Writer
THE AIR is filled with the sound of gun-fire at the moment, and wherever you turn, you can see youths dancing and singing in the streets. The celebrations are for the Tawjihi students who have passed, and in doing so have become the pride of their parents. They deserve our heartfelt congratulations and best wishes for the future.

This event has its own special flavor. The Tawjihi results are a boom time for the Kingdom's confectionary shops, who make special cakes and sweets for those in the mood to celebrate.

The announcement of the Tawjihi results was received last Friday with mixed feelings—satisfaction or depression. It is reported that about half of the 102,479 students who sat for the Tawjihi exams passed (47.9 percent compared to 45.9 percent last year). This contradicts the widespread view that the exams this year were harder than last year.

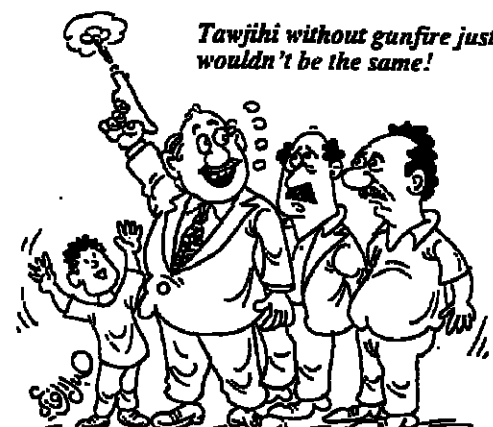
For the first time in the Kingdom, eight of the top ten students (those with the highest marks) graduated from schools in governorates outside Amman.

Also, in another turn-up for the books, government schools got the lion's share of top achievers,

with 64 out of 79 of the best students. As usual, the top ten were all girls, leaving the boys well behind.

But the story is not always a happy one. So far, about 11 people have been injured from stray bullets. The habit of shooting guns in the air on this occasion has escalated, and it seems that warnings have fallen onto deaf ears. Cases of live firing were reported in Amman, Balqa, Karak, Mafraq and Zarka. Files at the Public Security Dept., reveal that there have been 2925 such cases over the last four years.

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The Star

Jordan's political, economic and cultural weekly



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Supplément en français du Star

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AMMAN, 30 JULY — 5 AUGUST 1998, VOLUME 9, NUMBER 8, 350 FILS

اسبوعية سياسية مستقلة

Run on the dollar sparked by rumors

By Ilham Sadeq
Star Staff Writer
ECONOMIC CIRCLES are concerned over the recent unprecedented demand for the dollar, as many depositors have been exchanging their Jordanian dinars for US dollars.

This led to a sharp rise in the value of the dollar ranging between 713 fils to 715 fils compared with the Central Bank's (CBJ) fixed rate of 711 fils to the dollar.

Some economic experts and bankers share the view that rumors and speculation over the King's health, rather than other economic reasons triggered the market fluctuation.

Chairman of the Board of Directors of the Arab Bank, Mr. Abdul Majed Shoman, wished His Majesty the King a speedy recovery and voiced his confidence in the Jordanian economy. Referring to the high demand on the US dollar, Mr. Shoman reiterated that the banking sector in Jordan is better than any time in the past. Mr. Shoman, also the Arab Bank's General Director, stressed that the monetary policy in Jordan is sound and correct, and has attracted foreign investments and enhanced the investment climate in the country in general.

It is clear that concern over the strength of the Jordanian dinar are groundless and false. For about 10 years, the Central Bank of Jordan has maintained a keenly planned policy to protect the dinar and maintain its value. It has kept interest rates high to avoid devaluation of the dinar, despite opposition to this strategy from some experts who believe that this kind of policy kills investment and blocks development ventures.

However, the CBJ's officers stressed that the aim of this plan is to build a satisfactory reserve of foreign currency, and this is what it has achieved. "The situation is normal and there is nothing to worry about. The CBJ maintains a high level of foreign currency estimated at more than \$1.6 billion," said Dr. Tayseer Abdul Jabbar, a prominent economic expert and

member of the Stock Exchange Commission.

After accumulating this high level of foreign currency reserves, the CBJ started to gradually curb interest rates and allowed other banks to follow suit in order to encourage foreign investment. Regular compensation remittances from the UN to refugees are also made in US dollars, which has also helped to increase foreign currency reserves at the CBJ and support the position of the national currency.

Mr. Jamel Dasouki, General Director of the Arab Islamic International Bank, told The Star that now that the King has directly addressed the nation saying that his medical condition is improving, there is no need for further currency market speculation. He added, "I think that the situation is temporary and will soon improve as all indications show that there are no serious economic and financial reasons behind it."

Mr. Hani Saudi, a well-known money changer also denied that such market speculation dominates the trading and exchange of foreign currencies. He pointed out, however, that the CBJ sells the US dollar to clients at the official price, that is 710 fils, whereas other banks sell it at 713 fils, which is an

abuse of the system to achieve higher but illegal profits. "Money changers buy the dollar at 713 fils and sell it at 714 fils, while other banks are buying it at 710 fils and selling it at 713.5 fils," he stated.

Official sources are primarily attributing the issue to rumors and confused dealers. However, some analysts and investors argue that there are serious economic problems behind the high demand for the US dollar and other foreign currencies.

Some investors and brokers at the Amman Financial Market (AFM) were warned of the possible consequences of non-Jordanian investors carrying out foreign currency transactions on active and leading stocks on the market. Consequently, some foreign funds and portfolios may be withdrawn from the market and put into more profitable markets elsewhere.

Some financial observers forewarned that it could be the beginning of a series of major investment withdrawals following the recent growth rates crisis. They speculate that this matter has created a state of anxiety in the market and a crisis of confidence between the government and Jordanian and foreign investors. Either the cyclical is right, or the market will stabilize shortly.



Two-year old Dalia Bawadi embraces her father's picture inside his mourning house at Bureij refugee camp in the Gaza Strip, 27 July. Palestinian Farid Bawadi, 35, was killed in a car accident while going to work in Israel last Thursday. His family have agreed to donate his organs, which will be transplanted into four Jewish people at the Rabin Medical Center.

King speaks to the nation



JORDANIANS EXPRESSED a great sense of relief regarding the good news about His Majesty King Hussein's health. Speaking to the nation via satellite, Tuesday, King Hussein reassured Jordanians that the diagnosed type B-cell Lymphoma is completely treatable and curable. "The doctors are reassured that the treatment will be, God willing, complete and successful," His Majesty said.

He spoke about his health in a candid and frank way. "My condition has improved vastly, and the colds and chills I suffered from for almost three weeks, have completely gone on the first day of the administration of chemotherapy. The first cycle (over four days) ended the day before yesterday (Sunday), and I feel considerably better," the King said via satellite.

During the interview, His Majesty said his morale and spirits were high, and hoped to be among his people as soon as possible.

"As far as I am concerned, the morale factor is very, very high. I have always been a firm believer in doing your best to win, no matter what the battle is, and the news I hear from my friends at the Mayo Clinic is that I am well on the way towards a complete recovery."

The King expressed thanks to the Jordanian family for their sincere and noble feelings. He said, "all Jordanians live in my soul and heart during every minute of my life, and I am so grateful to them, and to my friends in the Arab and Muslim world, and to those throughout the world who have once again shown me much concern and support."

A statement issued by Mayo Clinic, Monday, stated that His Majesty King Hussein com-

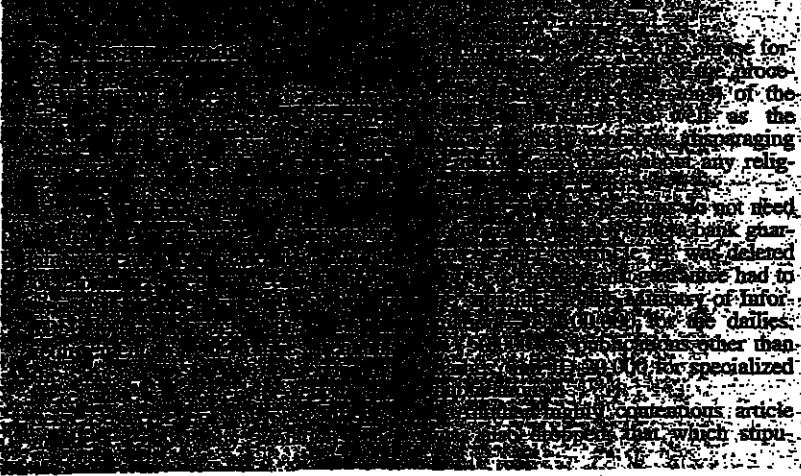
pleted a comprehensive and thorough series of tests. His physicians, in consultation with specialists from around the USA, confirmed the diagnosis of B-cell Lymphoma. They have said that this condition is highly treatable with chemotherapy. The statement continued that the program consists of chemotherapy medication over a four-day period. The therapy will be administered on six occasions, every 21 to 24 days. During this period, there will be regular blood tests and x-rays. Special medication will also be given to increase the white blood cell count, and antibiotics will be used to prevent infections that may develop during chemotherapy, the doctors said. The first cycle of therapy started last Friday, and the results were very encouraging.

During the interview, the King said that his temperament has returned to normal and the blood tests showed significant signs of improvement. Doctors at the Mayo Clinic say that plenty of relaxation, combined with good nutrition and exercise, will be an integral part of the treatment. His physicians are optimistic regarding the success of this program, aimed at eradicating the Lymphoma and restoring The King to normal health.

His Majesty The King is in constant touch with His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan, the Regent. The King said, "I have full confidence in my brother, the Crown Prince, and the people and the government of Jordan, who can shoulder their responsibility under any circumstances."

Prime Minister Abdel Salam Majali will be travelling to the US on Saturday.

Press law goes to final vote



It was clear that the committee worked under a great amount of pressure, as it only took eight sessions to discuss and research the amendments. The whole process took no longer than two weeks. Some parliamentary sources view this short, time-scale as clear evidence of interference from the higher executive authority. "Some of the laws that have been passed back to the Lower House clearly do not serve the national interest," said Deputy Nazih Asmarina.

There was also evidence early on of government influence (before the law was passed to the NGC). At the very beginning—when the draft was first presented to the Lower House—the majority of the representatives opposed the draft, but they still voted in favor of turning it over to the committee.

Asmarina continued, "the whole country expected the NGC to reject the draft law, and to send it back to the Lower House for final rejection, but this they failed to do. Two weeks ago, the committee voted 7 to 3 in favor of making amendments and to discuss the draft law further."

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How the media deals with the truth

By Christian Tyler
COMMENT IS free but facts are sacred, wrote C.P. Scott, editor of the Manchester Guardian, in 1926. "Neither in what [the newspaper] gives, nor in what it does not give, nor in the mode of presentation, must the unclouded face of truth suffer wrong."

Scott's famous dictum, as much a boast as a warning, was the proud standard of a British press which in his day regarded itself as a model for the free world.

Today, it is the US that carries that banner, priding itself on the accuracy and discipline of its journalism. So a recent series of goofs and fabrications, followed by red faces, apologies and sackings, has left people asking, in the words of The Washington Post's media correspondent: "What in tarnation is going on?"

Earlier this month, the television news channel CNN retracted a story that US troops had used nerve gas to kill American defectors during the Vietnam war. Two producers were sacked and a third resigned.

The Cincinnati Enquirer apologised for an attack on the business methods of a company

called Chiquita Brands International, saying its stories were untrue and based on stolen telephone recordings. It fired a reporter and offered \$10m in settlement.

In the first case, according to the investigating lawyer, the evidence simply did not justify the conclusion. But in both it seems that—to put it no lower—enthusiasm got the better of professional judgment.

Big mistakes are nothing new. Twenty years ago the Daily Mail ran a British Leyland "slush fund" story based on a forged letter. But mistakes are one thing. More alarming, perhaps, is the fashion for... well, simply making it up.

Last month, Stephen Glass, a young writer for

New Republic, was sacked after investigation showed that 27 of his 41 articles for the US magazine contained fabrications. The Boston Globe sacked a star columnist for making up characters and quotations in four pieces; the fact that she was black added a political twist. In 1980, a woman reporter on The Washington Post won a Pulitzer Prize for a heart-wrenching but concocted story about an eight-year-old heroin addict.

In the UK, Carlton Television has been accused of showing a simulated interview with Fidel Castro and a documentary on drug-running in which scenes were 'reconstructed', or faked.

It looks as if people who ought to know better are losing their grip on reality. Is this another

terms of thought and morality? How long, then, before suspicious readers and viewers refuse to swallow any more 'infotainment'?

Newspaper readers have always liked to say "you can't believe what you read in the papers", and the closer they are to the story (being more sensitive to errors, omissions, or nuances) the more likely they are to say it. Yet readers do believe much of what they read: it forms the substance of their knowledge and conversation about the world. Viewers used not to doubt the evidence of their own eyes—for the camera cannot lie, can it? Now they are learning to look askance at much of the stuff TV serves up as 'documentary'.

Truth and accuracy are not quite the same thing. Let us say broadcasting, a true story is

one in which the details are accurate and the selection of detail conveys a truthful picture.

Reporters have always been tempted to stretch the facts, sometimes to satisfy a demanding news editor, or to show off, or even to make reality seem more real.

A veteran British journalist recalled this week that when he was a cub crime reporter it was standard practice after grisly murders to say that the police had suspects when they had not; it was, he explained, a way of forcing the police to be more forthcoming in future.

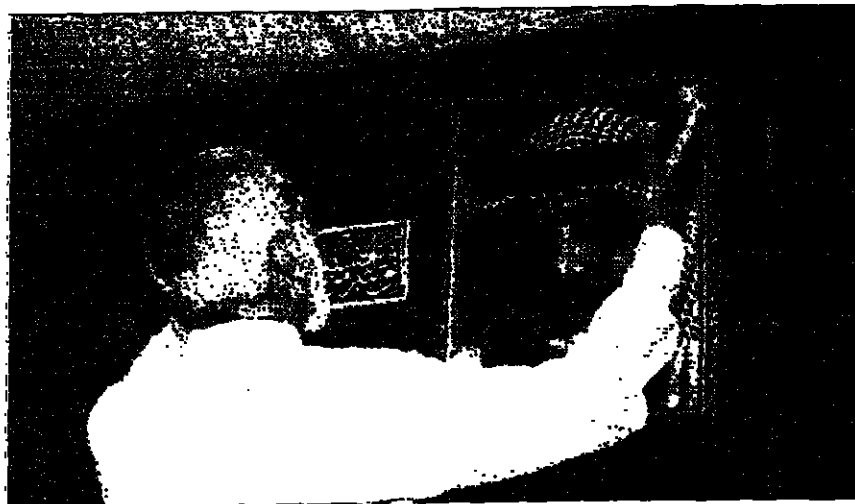
How many journalists, sent to cover a multiple pile-up on a fogbound motorway but unable to get to the scene, have not written of burly truck drivers 'weeping openly' amid the wreckage? Far from home, a trusted reporter can count on a certain immunity. Who is to contest his moving interviews and graphic descriptions? Nor can the photographer resist the temptation to embellish for greater poignancy and realism.

Was Joe Rosenthal's epic picture of the (second) planting of the US flag on Iwo Jima true? When Yevgeni Khaldei persuaded a Red Army soldier to climb to the roof of the Reichstag with a flag and pose against the burning skies

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Jordanians follow closely news about King

AMMAN (Star)—Jordanians celebrate as they watch His Majesty King Hussein address the nation from Mayo Clinic, Tuesday. Jordanians have been following closely news about the King health. His speech provided a welcome relief to people across the Kingdom.



How the media deals with the truth

Continued from page 1

The obvious explanation for current news fiction is competitive pressure, aided and abetted by technology. What is not so easy to decide is whether it is the cause or the consequence of the cultural climate.

"There is a personal ethos and a corporate ethos. I think it is the corporate ethos that has changed," says Rod Allen, a former TV man who is head of the journalism school at City University, London. The Anglo-American media are increasingly controlled by people with no journalistic experience, he continued. They arrived with management degrees and commercial objectives.

The US incidents could be explained as individuals rebelling against the stringent controls—the use of 'fact-checkers'—for example—introduced to guard against hoaxes and avoid lawsuits. "But in the UK, I think there is a real problem. The change of ethos has made it easier for journalists to lower their standards."

Harold Evans, the former Sunday Times editor who knows the score on both sides of the Atlantic, told an audience during his alma mater at Durham University last month that the famously free American press was declining—most of it into a "confusion of news, entertainment, fact and fiction. Television delivered little news but a lot of emotion and tendentious hypotheticals."

Facts are sacred but they are also expensive. Formerly, newspaper proprietors sought influence before profits. In the

UK, Lord Beaverbrook was satisfied with a 3 per cent return on his investment in the Daily Express. When businessmen took over in Fleet Street, they wanted a minimum 17 per cent. Journalists proved to be expensive (and not only because of generous expense allowances) and their numbers were duly cut.

The Daily Mirror has a third of the editorial staff it had 12 years ago. Work was put out to freelancers or sub-contractors. Space once allotted to news, or analysis of it by reporters, was given over to speculation by commentators who had been nowhere near the story.

Television networks stopped sending their own reporters to cover news. Programme-making was put out to independent companies over whose integrity the networks have little control. There is a tendency to publish rumour and suspend editorial judgment, as in the case of the recent investigation by Fulcrum Productions for Granada into the death of Diana, Princess of Wales, which gave prominence to a barely substantiated murder theory.

On both sides of the Atlantic, there has been over-reliance on remote sources. Shocking tales which provide the raw material for acres of comment, such as the recent story of a school-yard rape, too often turn out to be violations of the truth.

Meanwhile, the internet, which was supposed to create a more open information market, has been a mixed blessing. Its rumours are often reported as adjuncts to news

stories; a former White House press secretary, Pierre Salinger, was seduced by a malicious internet hoax claiming that the TWA jet-liner which crashed near Long Island in 1996 was brought down by a wayward US navy missile.

The trend to malevolent invention was confirmed by Geoffrey Goodman, a former assistant editor of the Daily Mirror, who now edits the British Journalism Review. "There's more truth in Dickens or in War and Peace than in most of the stuff in the newspapers today," he says. The speed and reach of transmission, the instant global impact of stories, had created "a kind of hyper-reality."

Radio and television were setting the agenda for newspapers in a way they never used to do, and the media were feeding on each other. "So we have creative journalism, like creative accounting."

Journalism has become a glamour business, most of whose aspirants have never been trained how to get, check and write stories. They will work for little or nothing, like Victorian apprentices, in order to get a foot on the golden ladder because, if pay is low at the bottom, the rewards at the top have ballooned in terms of both cash and exposure.

Like sport, management, book publishing and opera singing, journalism has become what the American economist Robert H. Frank calls a "winner-take-all" market. Journalists can become celebrities almost as quickly as the celebrities they help to create, and see their own picture splashed across the papers. In some interviews, it is hard to tell who is interviewing whom.

There are those who blame the cultural climate for blurring the line between fact and fancy, for making reporters write like novelists, for replacing the documentary with the 'docu-soap.' We should expect nothing else, they say, when

style comes before substance, spin doctors control political information, lobbyists and public relations people are pumping out tailor-made stories to lazy or harassed reporters. The enemy is no longer the military-industrial complex, according to a recent New Yorker article, but the 'media-spindustrial complex.'

It is tempting, also, to see a malign influence in the growth of 'media studies.' Students in this branch of sociology are being encouraged, against a background of postmodern relativism, to regard truth as irredeemably subjective and variable. This attitude, says Greg Philo, research director of the long-established Glasgow University media unit, is bound to spill out into the world.

Philo thinks many television documentary-makers and journalists have given up on the literal truth. "They don't even try to pretend that it matters," he says. Cleverness and ambition now rank higher than integrity, according to Ian Hargreaves, a former editor of The Independent, who is about to become professor of journalism at Cardiff University. "Irony is the dominant tone of the times, and as old hacks used to say, there is no typeface called irony."

Howard Kurtz, The Washington Post writer who asked what in journalism was going on, has come to his own conclusion. Referring to the recent string of mishaps, he says: "I don't think it's an accident. What all these things have in common is that editors and executives missed the red flag and failed to ask questions." And why was that? "It's a combination of hunger for sensational headlines, misplaced trust and the hyper-competitive world of the media these days."

He adds: "It makes Fleet Street look tame by comparison."

Financial Times Syndication

Namibian President meets Jordanian delegation

NAMIBIA (Petra)—Namibian President Sam Nujoma received this week a Jordanian delegation to the Afro-Arab Dialogue Conference headed by Minister of Industry and Trade Hani Mulqi. The delegation conveyed to Mr. Nujoma greetings from His Majesty King Hussein and HRH Crown Prince Hassan. It also conveyed to him a message from Prime Minister Abdel Salam Majali dealing with relations between Jordan and Namibia. President Nujoma praised his Majesty's distinguished role on the international scene. He also wished him a speedy recovery. The Namibian President commended Jordan's distinguished

role in the region especially with regard to the peace process. He expressed concern over the impasse facing the peace process due to Israeli intransigence and failure to implement international resolutions. Mr. Nujoma voiced his country's willingness to promote its relations with Jordan in the political, economic and cultural fields. The Namibian President said that he is looking forward to meeting His Majesty the King in the forthcoming Non-Aligned Movement Conference aimed at giving the movement a more active role in solving regional disputes. The Jordanian delegation also met with the Maldivian Prime Minister Mahthir

Bin Mohammad. Mr. Mohammad expressed admiration and appreciation of Jordan's role on the regional level and said that he is looking forward to meeting with His Royal Highness Prince Hassan during his next visit to Malaysia as he hopes to benefit from Prince Hassan's wisdom in establishing distinguished relations with international financial institutions, foremost of which is the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund. During the meeting, Minister of Industry and Trade Dr. Hani Malki conveyed greetings from Prince Hassan and the Jordanian Government to the Malaysian President.

ONE TOUCH II now on Jordanian markets

The ONE TOUCH II System (Self Monitoring Blood Glucose Meter) is the newest on the Jordan market. Launched earlier this week the ONE TOUCH II is the meter for measuring blood glucose levels for diabetics.

Produced by LifeScan, a Johnson and Johnson Company which specializes in self monitoring blood glucose system for people with diabetes, the ONE TOUCH II meter is one of the smallest that easily fits into your life. Although it was launched in the USA since 1991, it has quickly become a hit in the region. Today, it is sold by Al Amad Drug Store in Jabal Al Hussein, who are its official distributors in Jordan.

The complications of diabetes may be largely prevented or minimized by keeping the blood sugar level as close to normal as possible. The Self Monitoring of Blood Glucose or blood sugar levels, has become an important type of the management of Diabetes Mellitus, becomes a part of treatment to avoid hyper- and hypoglycemia.



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The ONE TOUCH II Meter detects most errors in blood sample size and application. It even notifies you when the meter must be cleaned. The Meter has many advantages.

Other advantages include the instant availability of blood glucose data, providing a crucial feedback to the patient and improves patients' commitments to diet, medicine and exercise.

tags that include more accurate than sugar testing, simplifies prevention of hyperglycemia and hypoglycemia. Keep records of up to 250 readings, and as an effective tool that permits you and your doctor to define, measure and achieve treatment targets that results in improved diabetes management.

For the Record

Taiwanese delegation visits Parliament

AMMAN (Petra)—An administrative delegation from the Taiwanese parliament on Tuesday visited the Parliament and met with Muhammad Abu Hdeib of the External Affairs Committee. The meeting focused on reviewing the Parliament's legislative role, and the committee members affirmed the necessity of developing relations between the two countries, particularly in the economic and trade fields.

Arab Journalists Association meets in Alexandria

ALEXANDRIA (Petra)—Meetings of the Arab Journalists Association began in the Egyptian city of Alexandria on Tuesday with the participation of senior Arab pressmen and members of the International Press Association. The three-day meeting discussed a number of issues such as developments on the Arab and international levels, the stalled Middle East peace process and Israeli conduct against the Palestinian people. Other topics for discussion include the freedom of press in the Arab World, as well as activating the role of the Association's Freedom Committee.

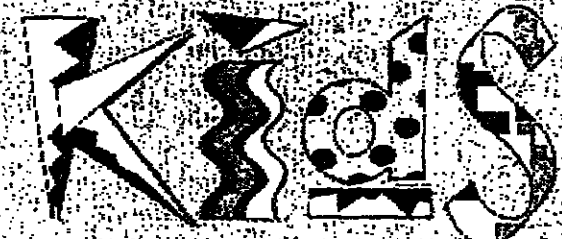
Prince Abdallah meets Jordanians in US

SAN FRANCISCO (Petra)—The Royal Highnesses Prince Abdallah bin Al Hussein and Princess Rania Al Abdallah met on Monday members of the Jordanian community in San Francisco and discussed issues of concern. San Francisco Governor, Willie Brown addressed a letter to their Royal Highnesses—which was recited by Jordan's Honorary Consul in the city, Kamel Ayyoub—wishing His Majesty King Hussein a speedy recovery. Vice-President of Jordanian-American Society in San Francisco Joseph Hijazin said the Jordanian community in San Francisco were happy, as this open meeting boosts contacts between expatriates and their homeland. Mr. Hijazin presented Prince Abdallah with the Society's emblem in recognition of HRH's honorary membership of the Society.

JBA president's economic review

AMMAN (Petra)—President of the Jordanian Businessmen Association Hamdi Tabbaa said this week that the monetary situation in Jordan is very sound, and the dinar position is reassuring. There is no cause for concern, Tabbaa said in a press report, as the Central Bank of Jordan has large reserves of foreign currency available. Tabbaa rejected all rumors and said there is no reason for buying dollars. During his recent visit to Jordan, Deputy Chairman of the World Bank expressed relief regarding the monetary situation in the Kingdom, and thanked the Central Bank for their efforts in building up large reserves of foreign currency.

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JORDAN

W E E K



An unconventional
report on Jordanian
news and views edited
by Marwan Al Asmar

Water mission

A fact finding mission formed by the Ministry of Water and Irrigation on 19 July, has submitted its preliminary report on the reason for the strange taste in the drinking water in west Amman. Minister of Water, Dr Munthir Haddadin, said that the committee had concluded that the odour problem began on 5 July, noting that no specific procedures were taken although there were operational instructions at the Za' Water Treatment Plant. A statement pointed out that the operators at the plant's control room also noted on the same day that the need for chlorine rose significantly. The statement said that the committee was convinced that the problem could have been avoided if precautionary measures had been taken to lower the flow of water to the plant and increase the quantity of active carbon in the treated water. The statement implied that despite detection of the odour problem from 5-8 July, officials at the plant did not carry out any measures to tackle the problem.

Grapes!

The import of grapes is to be banned from 15 August. Minister of Agriculture Mijhim Al Khureisha said the ban, to protect local growers, will be enforced till the end of the grape season.

Another bloc

A new parliamentary bloc is being formed in the Lower House this week. The "Parliamentary Action Bloc" includes deputies like Abdel Majed Al Aqtash, Dr Ahmad Anasab, Dr Reda Haddad, Ahmed Al Khatat, Mohammad Al Koz and Mijhim Al Soqour. Al Aqtash, an independent Islamic deputy, will act as spokesman.



Al Aqtash

Threat

It is widely regarded by some experts that importing goods through the port of Haifa will threaten the Jordan's food supply. A one-day seminar is taking place on 5 August at the Professional Associations Complex to discuss the issue.

Cooperatives

Head of the cooperatives section in the Ajloun Governorate, Abdel Karim Al Abbabneh, says his department is trying to increase public awareness of the many cooperative societies in the area. There are 18 cooperative societies in that neck of the woods, including five agricultural societies. The rest serve the general interests of the people in the area.

Employment

Minister of Labor, Mohammad Mahdi Al Farhan, lashed out at some employment offices who promise job opportunities for Jordanians in the country and abroad. He said there is evidence that these offices exploit the unemployed, and that from now on his ministry will take severe action against unlicensed offices in the country by taking them to court.



Al Farhan

AIDS

Five new AIDS cases were reported in Jordan in the last two months according to sources at the Ministry of Health. This means that nine new cases have been identified this year. Figures show that there are 183 people who are HIV positive in the country. Although there is no official confirmation of these figures, it is thought that 106 of these are Jordanians and 72 are foreigners.

Islamic Party

A new Islamic party could be on the way. This has always been on the cards, but it is only now that Islamists are seriously thinking about it. Minister of Interior, Nafih Rashid, said that there would be no problem licensing another Islamic party in Jordan if an application was made. In recent weeks, the media has taken an interest in the "Islamic household", especially following the Shura Council elections, which voted in a largely "moderate" to right wing trend. This has led to renewed speculation that a new Islamic party will be formed in the very near future.

Positive WTO negotiations

GENEVA (Petra)—General Secretary of the Ministry of Industry and Commerce Muhammad Halayqa, head of the Jordanian delegation to WTO negotiations, described the third round of negotiations which concluded in Geneva as positive. Most of the negotiating countries expressed their support for Jordanian membership. Mr Halayqa said that dual negotiations are expected to be conducted during the coming six months, which will include USA, EU, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, India, Turkey, Czech Republic, Slovakia, Uruguay and Japan. The head of the negotiating delegation, ambassador Kazaybani, said that Jordan has achieved great steps in the field of economic liberalization and that their bid should be supported.

Amended draft press law goes to final vote

Continued from page 1

Deputy Mahmood Kharabshah, spokesman of the NGC, also believes that there was pressure from above, and described the government's position as one of "you just pass the draft press law, and we will owe you one." Kharabshah continued, "I registered 10 reservations, mainly relating to the severe penalties proposed, which in my opinion, block freedom of expression."

The draft law is back in the hands of the deputies today (Thursday), for more study and analysis. The expected ratification date remains unknown as government sources have indicated that they hope the law will be endorsed before the end of this extraordinary session. The deputies themselves desire

more time for discussion—maybe extending beyond the forthcoming ordinary session. Mahmood Al Sherif, former Minister of Information and current Responsible Chief Editor of *Ad Dustour*, was pessimistic about the recent developments. "Our battle hasn't finished yet, since all the recent amendments could vanish in the plenary, but we greatly appreciate the work of the NGC. It's too early to drink the toasts, since we must wait for the Parliament in its two branches to protect the freedom of the press."

The engineer of the 1993 Press and Publication Law further declared that a new law is not needed, since the current one—with one or two amendments—is sufficient enough.



His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan, the Regent, on Tuesday expressed appreciation to Jordan's national taekwondo team. The Jordanian team won the men's first position, with the women's team gaining second place. Prince Hassan conveyed congratulations from His Majesty King Hussein to the members of the team, and urged them to continue the hard work. The Regent made a presentation to all the team members, who brought home six gold, four silver and four bronze medals.

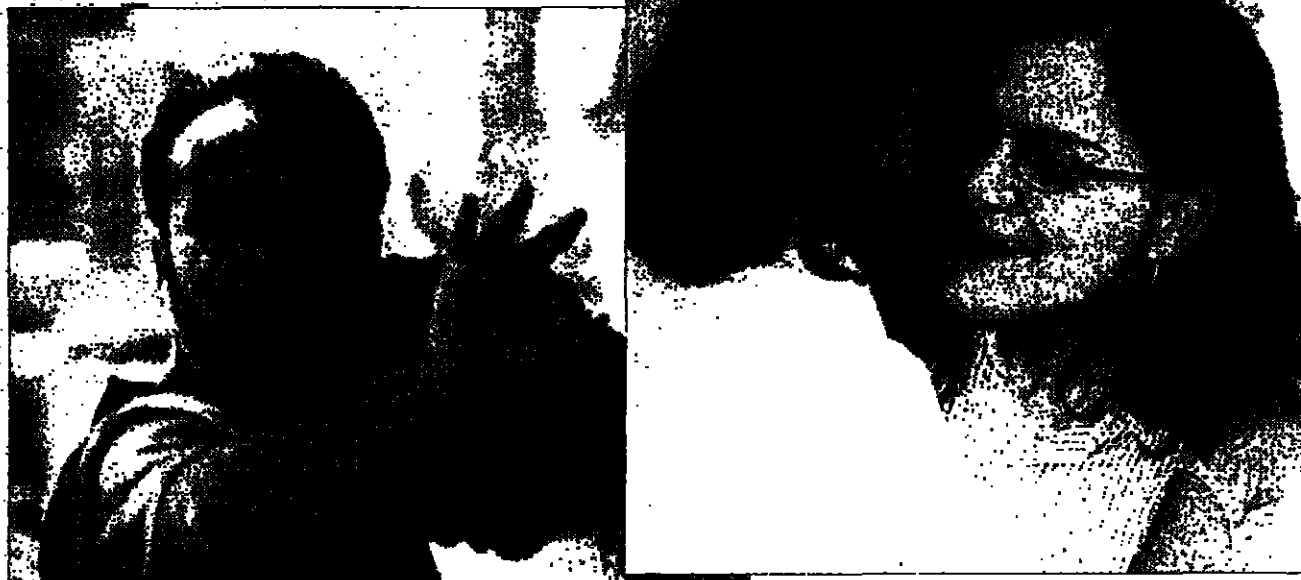
Tawjihi and shooting in the air

Continued from page 1

For some, the thought of celebrating wildly is far from their minds. Students who failed the Tawjihi exams are hiding from family and friends, frustrated and unable to come to terms with their failure. Some blame the Ministry of Education for making the exams harder this year—alleging that there is a policy to minimize the Tawjihi pass rate and thus curb the number of families shooting and celebrating in the streets. Some have called for the abolition of the Tawjihi exams all together, saying they put untold pressure and tension on every family whose son or daughter is taking the exam. Dr Mohammad Hamdan, minister of education, denied that the ministry has any intention of abolishing the Tawjihi, saying, "The General Education (GE) exams are common in all countries, and Jordan is no exception. The GE exams are the basis for submitting applications to join Arab and internationally recognised



The anguish of the Tawjihi



The despair of the Tawjihi

The joy of the Tawjihi

Urgent action needed to curb car accidents

AMMAN (Star)—Safety on the road, the dream shared by everyone in the community, is being put in the spotlight today as the result of a dramatic rise in fatalities and injuries caused by car accidents.

The increase of accidents urgently demands a substantial solution. It is reported that more than 500,000 persons die annually in car accidents, with further casualties exceeding 10 million.

There are also substantial material losses, estimated at billions of dollars, to be considered. In Jordan, traffic accidents take their toll on both

human and financial resources.

The real problem began back in the early 1970s with the dramatic increase in vehicles and population. Year by year the problem has grown, and serious action must now be taken to reduce car accidents. Annual figures speak volumes about the problem. Last year, available statistics showed that 39,005 car accidents occurred, which led to the deaths of 577 people, 16,259 casualties and estimated material losses of about one million J.D.

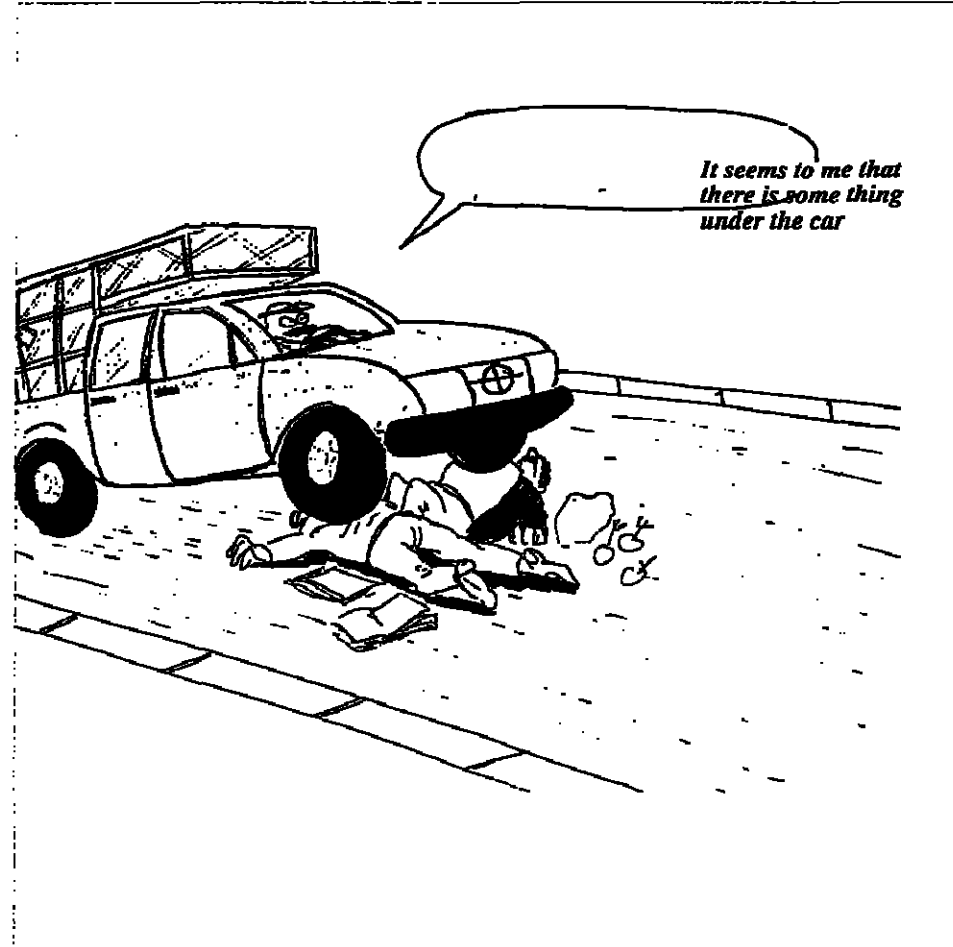
The Directorate of General Security and other authorities,

are looking for a solution to the problem, and through an awareness campaign are hoping to get across to people the grave impact of car accidents and the need for better road safety. They have highlighted problems in the Jordanian transport sector and are discussing possible solutions.

It has become apparent that lack of coordination and the absence of definite national policies and strategies are to blame for the critical statistics. Poor public awareness of the size of the problem, insufficient traffic training and driving instruction, the nonexistence of deterrent legislation or severe penalties for traffic offenders also contributes to the scale of the problem.

The study recommends the establishment of a Higher Traffic Council to operate as a guide on traffic policies and strategies, and a Jordanian Traffic Institute, to be in charge of training workers on traffic, to conduct studies and review legislation.

The security directorate, the directors of the traffic department, the licence department and the highway patrol all have an interest in finding effective strategies to curb the rate of car accidents.



Press Cocktail Press

Tawjihi, the kick

This week almost all columnists are talking about the results of the Al Tawjihi exams. Dr Mohammad Alyan in *Al Rai*, in a somewhat optimistic mood, says the nation, from north to south, is celebrating, through ululation, the results of the exams. He adds that Tawjihi is a watershed in the lives of many. He consoles those who didn't pass, saying that it is not the end of the world.

Jihad Al Moumami, writing in *Ad Dustour*, strikes a more sobering note. He asks whether it is logical for the government not to have any specific program for the "army of winners and losers in the Tawjihi exams?" He adds in amazement that it is incomprehensible that years have passed without the government taking some kind of action on the issue.

He says a comprehensive national action plan is needed to tackle this urgently. Without such a plan the problem will just increase and become "a disastrous phenomena that will threaten society."

Contrary to the more optimistic view adopted by Alyan, Al Moumami says those who have failed the exams face a bleak future. They have failed to be good pupils and will very probably fail in the post-school period, and some could even turn to crime "because of the absence of educational institutions, despite the fact that there are three ministries and tens of government departments whose job it is to look after the young generation."

Al Moumami doesn't stop there. He ponders the fate of those who passed. They are also likely to face great difficulty if the doors of universities close in their faces.

Many of those who passed will still face problems, especially those from low income families who are unable to afford the rising educational fees.

The columnist says that greater planning is needed to encourage technical training in an age where skilled work has become essential.

Water tankers



Ahmed Shaker, also writing in *Ad Dustour*, turns his attention to the water issue. He says that water tankers are still abusing the water situation in the country. This is in spite of the measures that have recently been taken by the Ministry of Water. He adds that if you, the consumer, still want to have water delivered to your home, it will cost you as much as JD 30. The rates had initially gone as high as JD 40 at the beginning of the so-called "water crisis" two weeks ago.

Water rates have been set by the Ministry, and they have been advertised in the press. It costs the consumer 300 fils per cubic meter at the water wells. However, it costs JD 1,750 fils per cubic meter for consumers in the Amman Governorate. Apparently the owners of water tankers have not taken any notice and are continuing to overcharge. Shaker also says that the Water Authority must be partially to blame because it has not stuck to its normal summer water distribution program. He points out that if the "water crisis" continues, he recommends that private water tankers be put under the supervision of the Water Authority. However, this is unlikely to happen. After all, we believe in free enterprise!

The Star
Jordan's political, economic
and cultural weekly
Online

<http://star.arabia.com>

It's all go isn't it. Water, growth rates, press law.
Do you think it's the heat?



Our Say...

Setting an example to the nation

HIS MAJESTY King Hussein's announcement to the nation on Tuesday that he was undergoing chemotherapy to treat a form of lymphatic cancer and that he was expected to recover completely has greatly uplifted the spirit of all Jordanians. Ever since the King was admitted to Mayo Clinic in the US two weeks ago and the revelation was made that he might have lymphatic cancer, the nation reacted spontaneously by holding prayers and expressing its sincere wishes for the King's swift recovery.

Rarely in the Arab world and indeed the world can one find such a shining example of love and trust between a leader and his nation. It is in these testing moments that both the Hashemite leadership and the Jordanian public exemplify the unique relationship that binds them.

And it is in these moments of personal hardship for every Jordanian that the King emerges as someone who reflects personal courage as well as great leadership. Even when he is fighting this vicious disease, the King opts to share his most personal thoughts with his people, keeping nothing away from them and proving time and again that as a man and as a leader he stands tall in a class of his own.

In a region where leaders keep their distance from their subjects and where the health of kings and presidents is considered a state secret, King Hussein chooses to come close proving that his life belongs to his people and country.

The transparency with which the Jordanian leadership has opted to deal with this sensitive issue reflects self-confidence in the ability of the state, leadership and people, to deal with crisis, internal and otherwise. While the King occupies the most precious space in the heart of every Jordanian, the state continues to function even in the time of crisis. That is the message that the King wanted to send to all of us.

His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan has wisely administered the affairs of the country during the temporary absence of the King.

Jordanians should feel proud and confident that their country is strong enough to withstand the challenges of the future.

While we eagerly await the return of our beloved leader, we join millions of Jordanians, in cities and villages, in camps and badia, in praying that his treatment will be successful and his recovery swift.

The King has dealt with fierce battles throughout his life and while this latest one may prove to be the most severe, we are confident that his resolve and courage will overcome his disease and that again he will set an example for us all.

A ban on truly independent thinking

By Dr Nabil El-Sharif

THE LOWER House of Parliament will start debating the proposed Press and Publications Law next week, and will go over the major amendments made by its National Guidance Committee.

One of the articles in the proposed law that did not get enough attention is the one that bans research centers from receiving any finance "from any foreign entity."

Only a few people ventured to comment on this article, number 46 in the draft Press and Publications Law, because defending would be, in some peoples' opinion, synonymous with supporting acts of espionage or collaboration with the enemy!

It is equally dubious that foreign institutions, ranging from UNESCO to Fulbright, have refrained from simply explaining their objectives, thus reinforcing the implication that they do stand accused of infiltration or shady dealings in Jordanian affairs!

It is useful to state here that the full text of article 46 as it appears in the original draft of the Press and Publications Law goes like this: "No study or research center, public opinion polling center or any of their employees may receive any assistance, aid or financial gift, or financing from any non-Jordanian entity. The Director of the Press and Publications Dept will close down any center violating these points, for at least three months and not exceeding six months, in addition to implementing penalties stated in paragraph 'A' of article 53 of this law (fines ranging from JD 30,000 to JD

50,000, as well as confiscating the sum of foreign money received).

The penalties stated in this article give the impression that foreign assistance in the area of research is nothing less than act of high treason in all cases, without exception. It is indeed amazing that this article would be proposed in a country that has always been dependent on foreign aid and has always dealt with this issue in a very relaxed and confident manner.

It is quite unbelievable that anyone would dare to make such a categorized statement about the foreign contribution to research at a time when we so proudly talk about co-operation with Europe for instance, and after signing the European-Jordanian partnership agreement.

I should stress, however, that I am not saying that all foreign aid is harmless or that it all comes with no strings attached. This statement would be as equally faulty as saying that all foreign aid to research has ulterior motives.

Foreign aid to research can be an important tool for the promotion of civil

society, and for the advancement of independent or non-governmental research institutions.

If Article 46 is passed in its original phrasing, it would be safe to say that an important independent mechanism for monitoring governmental conduct has been silenced for ever.

We all remember that the findings of the Strategic Studies Center on Unemployment did not please the government, and that these findings were only released after months of squabbling. If this independent survey on unemployment was not conducted, the only figures we would have had would have been the government figures.

That is why one cannot help but speculate that the real motive behind this article is to ban any independent or non-governmental scrutiny of our state of affairs.

Our Lower House of Parliament, which will soon start debating the proposed Press and Publications law, is called upon to give this Article the attention it deserves.

Instead of banning all independent thinking, as the current phrasing of Article 46 intends to do, the receipt of contributions to research centers should be approved in advance by an independent commission or even by the Minister of Information. This review procedure would ensure that highly needed foreign contributions to the promotion of civil society would continue—without the risk of espionage or infiltration.

Eye on Jordan



Israeli perspective

Why is he waiting?

Netanyahu is facing a crafty and hostile Palestinian adversary and he holds very few real cards

By Prof Yehoshua Porat

IT IS as clear as daylight that Mr Benjamin Netanyahu is uncertain whether to continue meeting the commitments which the previous government took upon itself within the framework of the Oslo process. There are those who attribute this to his ideological stances. Others, a little more cynical attribute his vacillations to fear of the break-up of his coalition, on which his administration depends. Very few observers try to analyze the reality which is the basis for Netanyahu's hesitation.

If Netanyahu saw himself as freed from the burden of the Oslo process, and was convinced that he had received the authorization of the voters of Israel to ignore an official international agreement, which a legally constituted previous government took upon itself, he would have acted immediately following his election. He would simply have announced that the Palestinians had not fulfilled their commitments and thrown out the whole process—he certainly would not have signed the Hebron Agreement and begun its implementation.

Because he behaved in precisely the opposite way, one cannot help but conclude—unless one takes a less than candid look at reality—that Netanyahu sees himself, without any great enthusiasm, as bound, in principle, by Israeli commitments.

If fear of the breakup of his coalition was his only consideration, he would be wary of harming the settlers of Hebron, who are loathed by the majority of the Israeli public, and would not have given up Israeli control of Arab Hebron. But today, two years after his election, Mr Netanyahu, along with many other Israelis, has lost the last remnant of belief that Arafat and his friends desire to reach a peace with us. The behavior of Palestinian leaders is clearly motivated by a single goal: receiving the greater part of the occupied territories, while giving up nothing in return, and of transforming those territories into a base for the continuation of the struggle against Israel.

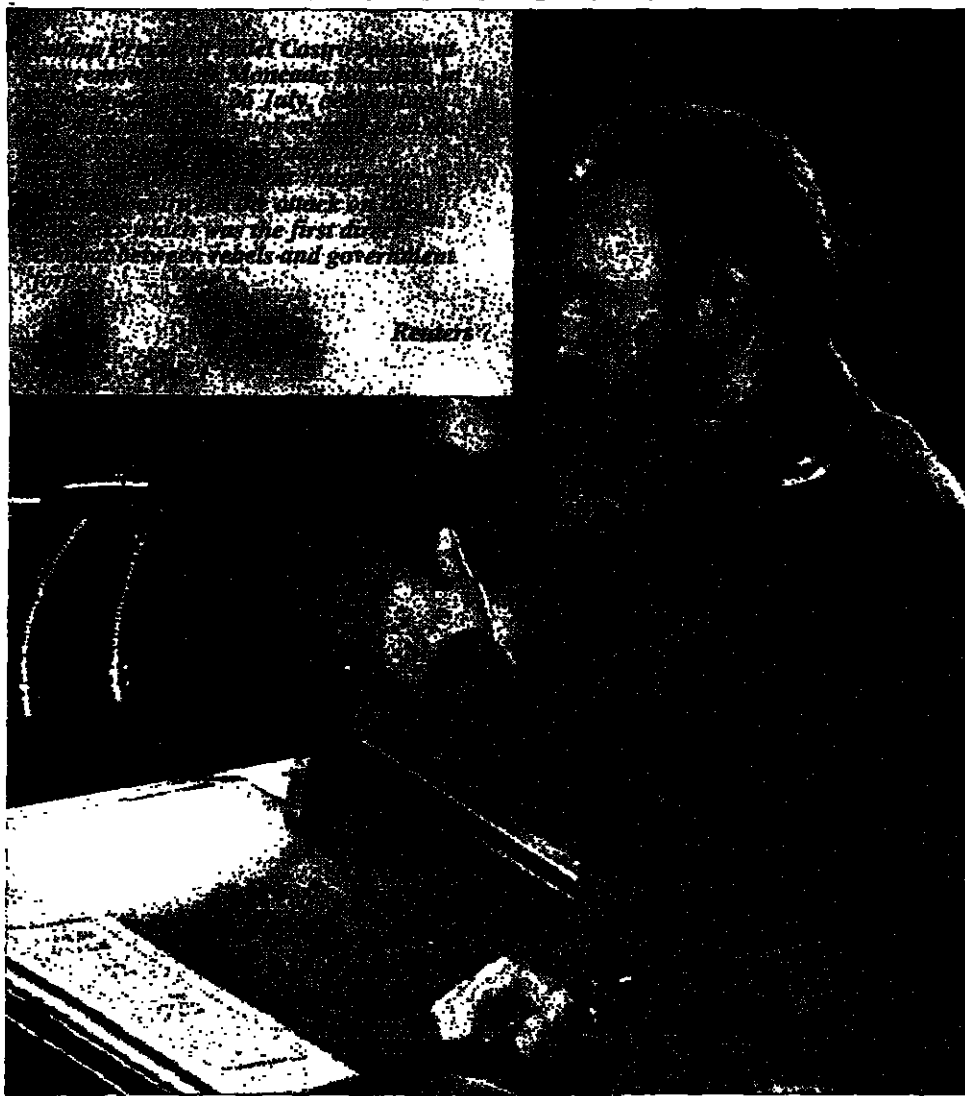
Israel is being preached to from all sides, that in order to fulfill the peace process there is a need for "confidence building" Israel must convince the Arabs that it desires peace by making various concessions, even beyond those reached in the Oslo, Taba and Cairo agreements. No one mentions,

however, that, to this end the Palestinians must first convince us that they must convince us that after preaching for almost 100 years that we have no part or patrimony in this land, and that we must not return to it or reconstitute our national independence in it that they must, after fighting us in every possible way, convince us that they have truly changed their ways and are prepared for peace and reconciliation.

The main act that the Palestinians should undertake in order to build confidence is to annul the genocidal Palestinian Charter. Instead of an annulment, we got a cheap performance of primitive craftiness and cooperation, either innocent or shameful, by Israeli partners. Arafat and his cohorts invest international aid money to build a military force larger by far than what was determined in agreements, in order to join Israel's enemies should con-

front to all of them. They are joined by the Israeli Arab supporters, who promise to struggle to turn tiny and shriveled Israel into a demilitarized, transitional state. Under these circumstances, only a blind man would agree to aid himself of the few cards he still retains before the final status talks begin. In order to know whether the Palestinians really desire peace, we should discuss all of the problems and all aspects of the final peace agreement with them before we withdraw, not afterwards. That is what Netanyahu is attempting to do—to repair a little of what the architects of Oslo greatly twisted. This is why those who built castles in the air and inflated the balloon of peace are so angry.

Translated from the Hebrew daily, Ma'ariv



The Star

Jordan's political, economic and cultural weekly

An independent political, economic and cultural weekly, published every Thursday in Amman by Jordan Press & Publishing Co. (Ad-Dustour).
Editorial & Advertising: Telephone 5664153 Fax 5667170
P.O. Box 591 Postal Code 11118 Amman - Jordan. e-mail: Star@arabia.com
URL: http://www.star.arabia.com

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The Magical Beggar
(NEWS ITEM) Russia reached an agreement with the International Monetary Fund on a multibillion-dollar package to stabilize its financial markets. The money is part of more than \$20 billion that Russia hopes to assemble from the U.S. and the EU.

Middle East East Bank by Khairi Jamil Sanctions

THE COMMEMORATION of the UN Declaration of Human Rights, due to take place at the end of this year, could well be—by default—a commemoration of the degradation of human existence and the frailty of the human condition in general. In the hope of punishing wrong doers, and consequently protecting the ideal of human rights, we have witnessed policies that punish both abusers and abused alike.

Nowhere is this more apparent than in the domain of the punitive sanction policies undertaken by the United Nations. The idea itself, which aims to punish rogue leaders following the policies, ends up adding insult to injury to those people who are already suffering the effects of the severe policies pursued by their own leaderships.

This rationale—that if people suffer economic hardships they turn their anger against their leaders and take action to remove them—is very similar to the thesis that was advocated by the extreme left. The so-called revolutionary groups of the late 1970s and early 1980s used to oppose humanitarian aid directed at relieving poverty-stricken areas in the world, because such measures supposedly abetted the people's anger, and blunt their revolutionary zeal.

In both rationales—the UN and of extreme left—the outcome is clear. If people cannot get their hands on basic sanitary and medical equipment, they will die.

Sanctions, as a policy, played a major role in the geopolitics of the 20th Century. The League of Nations used sanctions to make aggressor states in the 1930s conform to international norms. They failed, and it took a world war (with millions of casualties) to uphold these norms; these same norms were split up again in the immediate aftermath of the great conflagration.

The League of Nations was replaced by the UN, who had learnt by this stage that it was impossible to impose sanctions on world powers, because it only increases their resolve to go their own way. The paradigm of the ex-USSR and its satellites shows this to be true, as they never conformed to the notion of human rights. Even little Cuba was hardly affected by sanctions, because it had a whole bloc of ideological allies to subsidize its economy, enabling it to continue along its chosen path.

Now it is only small countries—those with under-developed economies like Sudan, Libya, Iran and Iraq—that have to face sanctions. Every one can see the economic hardships that have been caused to these countries, but has there really been any weakening of their resolve to resist? There is one single member state in the whole of the UN who would say that their sin is to punish the citizens of the sanction-hit country, but this is exactly what is happening. These people are being held responsible for the actions of their leaders, and are punished collectively in a manner that even the UN Charter stands against.

The sanctions policy has failed in the past and will fail again in the future. The people who suffer under sanctions direct their hatred and animosity towards the international institutions—the very same institutions that are supposed to be safeguarding their human rights, and who talk endlessly of international order and morality. The policy of sanctions has become a cheap excuse for the lack of imagination and alternative thinking and direction of the international institutions.

Business scene

■ The Jordan Export Development and Commercial Centers Co. (JEDCO) is leading an intensive campaign to upgrade national products and promote exports. Lately it has organized a seminar on environmental management in industrial companies to discuss means of maintaining integrity between industry and investment. In addition it plans to boost awareness of environmental management. About 30 participants attended the seminar representing the industrial and services sectors, including the Royal Scientific Society, the Investment Promotion Corporation and the Industrial Development Bank. The environmental management program is known as ISO14000. JEDCO is planning to organize a training course next month in the auditing bylaw for ISO 14000.

■ The future of the pharmaceuticals industry in Jordan and ways of transferring high technology into this vital sector was the topic of a specialized scientific seminar held at the Jordan Women's University last week. The pharmaceutical industry in Jordan has maintained high standard in quality and has managed to compete on the international market. In his speech at the opening, Dr. Mohammad Al-Halayka, secretary general of the Ministry of Industry and Trade, stressed that entering the global markets presents challenges to Jordanian industries, so it is important to strongly emphasize the need to upgrade products and improve quality. Dr. Halayka also said that such seminars help to exchange expertise and speed up the transfer of high-technology to various industries, particularly to pharmaceuticals. Jordan is currently undergoing tough negotiations with the World Trade Organization (WTO) to conclude a formula for free trade exchange.

■ A report on the pharmaceuticals industry in Jordan stated that overall investment in this branch of industry reached \$400 million, whereas registered capital for this sector stands at JD171.7 million. Workers in this sector totaled 3200, the report added. Currently there are 16 pharmaceutical plants (13 already operational and 3 under construction). The revenue from pharmaceutical exports, which ranks second after phosphates, reached \$180 million last year. Jordanian medicines reach about 35 markets in the Arab countries, Europe, America and the Far East.

Foreign Exchange

Wednesday, 29 JULY

	Buy JD	Sell JD
US\$	0.7080	0.7100
£	1.1510	1.1568
DM	0.4124	0.4145
S\$	0.4801	0.4825
¥	0.1227	0.1233
HK\$	0.5624	0.5652
THB	0.3667	0.3685
SGD	0.8419	0.8421

Beat the Millennium Bug

By Ilham Sadeq
Star Staff Writer

EVERY AGE has its own speciality, features and challenges. Approaching the end of the twentieth century we are witnessing unique challenges that could alter the face of the world during the next millennium.

In the case of health, there is the Viagra craze, which is currently promising to cure impotence and give men a new lease of life. In the business world, globalization and the world-wide trend towards the free market economy is just one example of the endless challenges that lie ahead for financial and economic institutions.

The one thing that almost all sectors of society have in common nowadays is their increasing dependence on computers and high-technology. That's why the problem known as the Millennium Bug or the year 2000 problem is such a hot story. What exactly is this "Bug," called sometimes Y2K?

Highlighting the challenges that will result from the Bug, the BritishBank recently organized a seminar at Le Meridien Hotel, Amman, called "Beat the Millennium Bug."

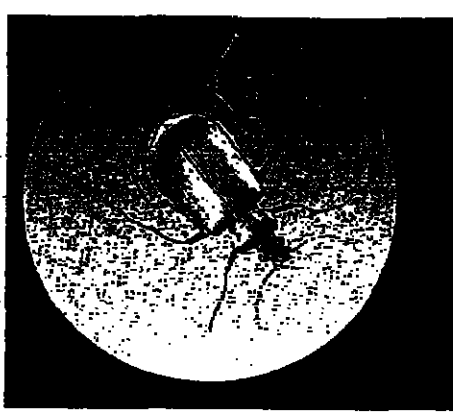
Mr. Ramzi Batshon, Technical Services Executive at the BritishBank spoke about the preparations that must be made to face the problem. Firstly, we should identify the problem, discuss its potential impact and then decide how to respond to it, he told participants.

Although most people have now heard of the millennium bug, few businesses realize the possible extent of its effects. Just imagine all computer operating systems crashing on the first day of the new millennium. It is indeed a bad omen for businessmen and universal institutions depending so much on high-tech for their data processing.

Planned celebrations world-wide to welcome the new millennium, could well be cancelled. "The millennium bug poses a very real and significant risk, not just to computers, but to any equipment that recognizes the date by using a microchip—this means that it will affect the infrastructure on which your business relies, e.g. transport systems," said Mr.

Batshon.

Most computer operating systems, including microchips and computers, were originally developed using six digit date fields. As a result, the year 2000, in an unconverted system will open as 00, so the first



of January 2000 would be recognized as 01.01.00," he clarified. However, most computer systems will recognize this as the year 1900.

Mr. Batshon pointed out that the problem may also be exacerbated because the year 2000 is a leap year. A fault may also occur in the computer's calcu-

lations. "The potential problem could either be a total failure or an error, but it is imperative to emphasize that the risk threatens every sector," Mr. Batshon said, adding that the total cost of converting existing systems all over the world could be about \$600-800 billion.

Equipment at risk includes personal computers, ATM's, process controllers, security systems, lifts, air-conditioning and lighting systems, aircraft and ATC (Air-Traffic Controlling systems) and nuclear warheads.

In addition, Mr. Batshon explained that any software that performs time based calculations, building and equipment maintenance, appointments, or computer back up systems, systems to determine eligibility of consumers, overdue payment inventory controlling and loans system...etc are at risk.

The potential impact of Y2K, can be divided into direct and indirect.

Direct impact would mean business failure, operations disruption (because of the lack of

compliant systems), loss of markets and customers, and reduced profits.

Indirect impact could mean disruption to customers and supplies, legal implications, insurance cover and employee morale.

Project managers and accountability are the key elements needed to contain the problem. "Compliance to the Y2K problem is mandatory—not optional—because of the high risks," Mr. Batshon stressed.

It is also essential to make sure that all parties whom we deal with in business operate using compliant systems.

To conclude, everyone has to recognize that there is no magic solution to this universal problem. We are all in one boat, so harm to one will affect us all, so it is vital to be ready to make a real effort to beat the Millennium Bug.

It has been recently reported that Wall Street's first simulated test of stock trading in the year 2000, concluded last week, revealed no date-sensitive problems, according to officials at the Securities Industry Association (SIA). SIA, whose headquarters is split between New York and Washington, simulated stock trading on 3 January, 2000.

The only hitch uncovered by this test and three previous tests, which simulated trading at the end of 1999, were linked to infrastructure and routing problems, said John Panchery, the association's year 2000 project manager. "So far all indications are that it went extremely well," he said, referring to a test that involved 29 brokerages and all major stock exchanges.

Panchery added that the routing and infrastructure snags were likely the result of the way participating firms and exchanges were using test equipment and logical main-frame partitions to separate test trades from normal trading activities.

"A lot of these connectivity issues will go away because firms will use their normal routing mechanisms to send, buy and sell orders in 2000, as well as when the SIA runs industry-wide tests with all participants beginning next March," said Panchery. The association is planning two more tests to cover mutual funds and options trading before releasing aggregate results next month.

Naouri Group participates in the first Pan Arab Quality Expo



Naouri Group President, Ibrahim Al Naouri, (Right) shakes hands with Deputy Prime Minister for Development Affairs, Jawad Al Anani

NAOURI GROUP participated in the first Pan Arab Quality Expo that took place in Amman from July 20-24 under the patronage of His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan, the Regent. It was the first specialized quality expo in the Arab world for companies which have been awarded ISO 9000 certification.

Dr. Jawad Anani, deputizing for Prince Hassan, opened the event and addressed the participants. He later visited the stands of the 90 participating companies from Saudi Arabia, Syria, Egypt, and of course Jordan.

Companies representing business, services and trade took part, which proves the level of awareness among Jordanians in particular, and Arab companies in general, of the changes that are taking place at present and the preparations that are required in the near future.

Naouri Group is a pioneer which has attained the ISO 9002 certification for three of its companies last year, and has already implemented an innovative system for a fourth company within the Group, which will apply for certification very soon. It will be the first company in Jordan to achieve the certification for travel and tourism.

Naouri Group is the holding company for several distinguished companies offering services in the field of shipping, transport, travel, tourism, inspection and certification. A new company was recently formed in Jordan, extending the services of the Group to the field of certifica-

tion. Near East Inspection Co. offers the services of one of the largest and most renowned companies in the field of certification, the German TÜV Bayern Group.

Since its inception, the company has performed many audits and achieved a respectable share of the market.

At the First Pan Arab Quality Meeting, the Near East Inspection Co. was selected to represent the experiences of certification bodies in Jordan and the Arab World. A paper entitled "Quality System Auditing, Difficulties and Remedies" was presented by Eng. Azzam Hiasat on behalf of TÜV Bayern Group, and covered operational and business difficulties in the profession in Jordan and the Arab countries.

Operational difficulties could be described as process related and country related, while business difficulties were categorized as market related. Remedies were suggested and the recommendations of the First Pan Arab Meeting were as follows:

- Harmonizing existing regulatory rules and resources.
- The "exchange of expertise" as an on-going process.
- Establishing a national accreditation and certification organization, similar to the British UKAS and the German TGA/DAR.
- Establishing the nationally approved "auditing code of practice" and qualification of auditors, and categorization of certification bodies based on relevant international standards.

Industrial zones come to the rescue of the environment

By Ibtisam Awadat
Star Staff Writer

THE PROBLEM of having industries within the built environment is something which the government has been addressing for well over a year now. The current policy is to "allocate sites within the Kingdom's cities for industrial purposes only," thereby reducing the level of unplanned industrial expansion. By concentrating industries into one site it becomes easier to protect the local environment—as the levels of pollution and noise, as well as the disruption to the local "transport network" can be managed better.

"We began our policy a year and a half ago, in order to stop the arbitrary spread of factories within the municipalities," said Tawfeeq Krishan, the Minister of the Municipal Rural Affairs and the Environment (MRAE). So far, 12 industrial zones have been established—one zone for each governorate.

One of these zones is located in the Al Jeeza municipality, 40km to the south of Amman. There are three main industries occupying the site, covering an area of 155 dunums. One factory produces facial tissues, a second canned food, while the third manufactures aluminum profiles. The capital required to establish this industrial zone totaled \$65 million. "We received financial aid from the



Tawfeeq Krishan, Minister of MRAE, on a tour at Al Jeeza

World Bank and some national banks," said Iyey Nqol, chairman of the board. "The three factories created 500 local job opportunities," Mr. Nqol added.

Although, all three industries are radically different, the governmental policy of locating them together is seen to work at Al Jeeza, as they all benefit from each other. Mr. Krishan, on a recent tour to the industrial zone, expressed his satisfaction to the Star. What I admired most about the site is the way they use water from their refi-

ery station (waste water) in order to cultivate berseem, fruit trees, and other environmentally pleasing plants.

The minister, answering a question posed by The Star regarding the low level of industrial activity in Jordan as a whole, expressed his anger at the industries themselves. "We in Jordan have all the necessary conditions for successful industrial development, like an abundance of available cheap labour, large amounts of vacant land, suitable investment laws, as well as a 10 year tax exemption for all investors. Yet, despite all this, we are still unable to compete in the world market," the minister continued, "in my opinion the problem lies with the greedy investors, who seek large profits over short periods, without giving much attention to the quality of their investments."

Regarding industries role in the environment, the minister addressed the cabinet recently, and proposed limiting all new industrial investments to these zones. Those businessmen who intend to open large factories within built up areas, will have to submit an application to a supervisory committee, made up of representatives from the Ministry of Interior, Ministry of Health, and the MMRAE, as well as others. All parties hope that this policy will cure the environmental problems that we face today.

Direct marketers back in business in China

By Maggie Farley

SHANGHAI—Amway Corp., Avon Products Inc. and Mary Kay Corp. are back in business in China after being sidelined in April by a government ban on direct selling.

But new rules mean that Avon ladies may not come calling the way they used to: The US-based direct-marketing giants must open retail stores. Sales agents still may take orders and deliver products door-to-door, but under a government measure designed to keep salespeople from being saddled with unsold wares, they no longer must buy the goods from the company before trying to resell them.

Avon opened retail and wholesale outlets on June 15, and Amway resumed operations on July 21 with special permission to use their sales representatives for service and delivery but not direct selling. Mary Kay has received an unofficial go-

ahead from the government to reopen and says it expects official approval soon.

"The purpose of the ban was to cull the bad ones and keep the good ones in order to protect the consumer, but these last three months, we have all been heavily impacted," said Chadwick Chien, Mary Kay's financial controller in Asia. "But we all knew that sooner or later we would get back to business."

The Chinese government banned direct selling on April 22, complaining in a directive that such practices spawned "weird cults, triads, superstitions and groupthink." Multilevel marketers typically develop a network of sales agents who buy products at a discount and resell them, earning bonuses through commissions and by bringing new people into the company.

Avon introduced the practice in China in 1990, followed by Amway, Mary Kay, Tupperware and Sara Lee, companies

that found it to be a successful marriage of American-style entrepreneurial spirit and Chinese networking. US Trade Representative Charlene Barshefsky went to bat for the companies after the ban, pointing out that together they have invested at least \$120 million in plants and offices in China and enlisted more than 2 million salespeople in their networks.

Their success spawned thousands of imitators, including a fair share of frauds selling everything from fake gold to potency pills. After the ban's implementation, at least 10 people were killed in protests in Hunan province, where thousands of people were stuck with motorized foot massagers and magic health potions they had bought and suddenly could not sell.

While the April directive was designed largely to weed out the fly-by-night operators, the multinational companies were reined in as well. In a meeting

with Barshefsky in April, Chinese Trade Minister Wu Yi reportedly accused the companies of breaking rules against selling imported products—they are allowed to sell wares manufactured only in their Chinese plants—and illegally recruiting students as sales agents. The government also objected to motivational meetings that reward top sellers and recruit new ones.

But the companies offered Chinese citizens a chance to make money independently in a time of mass layoffs in the country. That, combined with their significant investment, has made the government unwilling to shut the giants out completely. The new regulations state that only enterprises with an overall investment of \$10 million or more may employ sales agents.

LA Times-Washington Post News Service

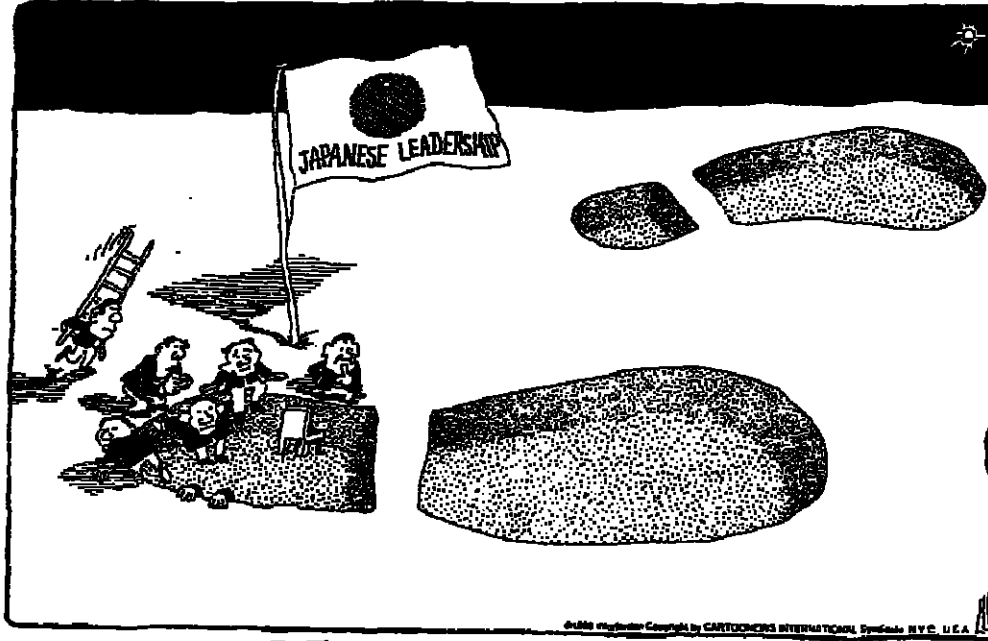
MARKET WATCH

Highest and lowest performing stocks in the Amman Financial Market

SATURDAY	SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> TADINCO 5.11 Nizak Industry 5.56 Arab Investment Bank 4.64 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Utd Electricity 5.26 United Industry 5.00 Zana Investment 5.17 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Al-Nar Insurance 5.00 United Electricity 5.00 TADINCO 5.30 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Union Bank 5.38 United Financial 5.41 Call Insurance 5.30
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Al-Nisar Insurance 5.14 Industry Union 5.15 Trade Center 6.67 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Commercial Industry 5.31 National Cable 5.26 Industrial Reserve 5.17 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Jordan Kuwait Bank 3.16 Car Union 3.70 International Tourism 2.94 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> National Steel 5.66 National Investment 5.68 United Industry 4.00
General Price Index 167,428	169,590	172,228	174,630
Trade Volume 700,664	128,919	897,836	1068,477
Stock Volume 569,966	138,927	560,916	540,029
Highest Traded Stocks			
Al-Ahli Bank 140,975	Tourism Hotels 289,300	Der Address 131,864	Arab Bank 433,725

All data provided by ACCESS Tel: 646868 Fax: 646949

Lurie's NewsCartoon



In The Footsteps Of Economic Recovery

Prophet and loss

New Age guru Kahlil Gibran was no saint, Robin Waterfield says. But isn't fallibility proof of humanity? Mike Bradley meditates.

A SOFTLY spoken, bearded beanpole of a man, Robin Waterfield, 45, possesses a casual charm that pervades both his prose and his conversation. He lives quietly in Teddington, Middlesex, with his wife and teenage children, plying his trade as a professional classicist, writing translations, commentaries and academic articles in the comfort of a dark, book-stuffed study. Unaggressively confident, he has the gift of remarkable recall and comes across as refreshingly unacademic even when expounding upon complex subjects.

Waterfield's new biography, to be published next month, entitled *The Prophet: The Life and Times of Kahlil Gibran* recently brought him more attention than he is used to. Reports focused on his portrayal of the Lebanese mystic poet and painter as a less-than-perfect guru with a fondness for women and arabic (a traditional Lebanese drink akin to ouzo). How, went the line, could the author of a work of such flawless spirituality as *The Prophet* turn out to be well, so very fallible? The revelations rocked New Age devotees, and Waterfield was, somewhat unjustly, portrayed as a clinical academic and heartless debunker.

Waterfield is unfazed by the attention, faintly amused even. A former university lecturer in Ancient Greek, specializing in philosophy, his first book *Plato: Philosopher*, was published by Penguin in 1982. After that he worked as a copywriter until, in 1988, he was appointed commissioning editor of the Arkana imprint. Penguin's New Age arm.

His study at home contains a well-stuffed "vanity shelf" of his works: translations of Xenophon, Plutarch, Herodotus, Aristotle and, outnumbering the rest, Plato, whom he describes as "my main man." But, he says, "I can't survive just translating Plato, so I do other things which, I hope, will have greater commercial possibilities."

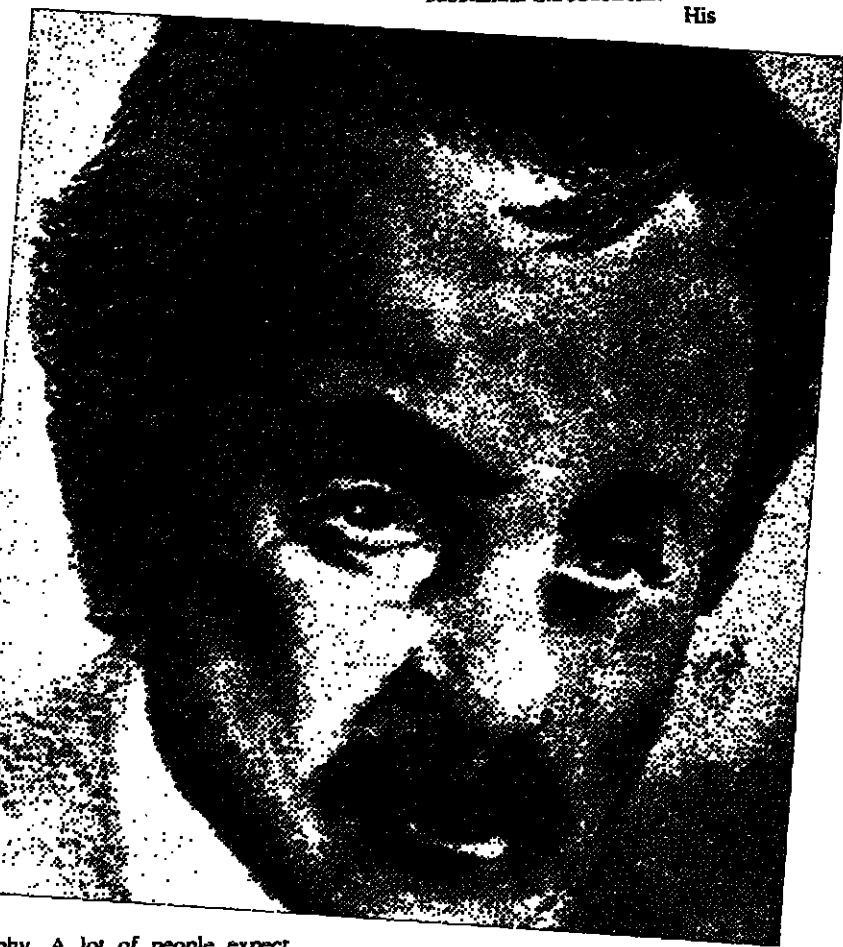
Appropriately, Waterfield's new biography coincides with the 75th anniversary of the publication of *The Prophet*, a collection of 26 homilies revolving around the ideas of reincarnation and the migration of the human soul, written in a style that could be described as Walt Whitman-meets-the-Bible. The book is a key New Age text, and has so far sold nine million copies in North America alone (not counting the UK market or the territories in which it has been translated into 22 languages).

Beloved of pop stars and actors, Gibran is perhaps best known for his "oak tree and cypress" passage on marriage, a staple of secular weddings, and a source of great irritation to many a C of E vicar. Born in 1883, in the Maronite Christian hamlet of Bsharri on the slopes of Mount Lebanon, Gibran emigrated to Boston in 1895. In 1912 he moved to New York City, where he remained until his death from cirrhosis of the liver in 1931.

As the title implies, Waterfield's biography is an attempt to solve the central dichotomy in the life of a man who so often hid behind an ingenious facade, and one about whom so much adorning, inaccurate material has been

written. For this, his function as biographer had to move "beyond being a writer to being a detective."

Gibran's popularity is huge. Since *The Prophet* went into the public domain the market is sustaining four or five editorials, of which the Arkana imprint accounts for sales of around 15,000 a year. Also popular is *Jesus: The Son of Man*, of which Waterfield says, "I think it's a good book. Gibran was always interested in the figure of Christ, whose original teachings formed the basis of his main philosophy."



phy. A lot of people expect him to have been a Sufi, whereas in fact he was brought up as a Maronite Christian.

In 1995, Waterfield edited an anthology of Gibran's work, which led to Peter Carson, then head of Penguin, asking him to write this biography. "In the course of writing introductions for the Arkana books, I had read all the other biographies—the main one by Gibran's cousins Jean and Kahlil Gibran and two earlier ones. None was particularly satisfactory."

So he decided to write a life that would be authoritative and at the same time "set the record straight," in part by rounding out the character of this extraordinary and compulsively mendacious man. "It took me two years to research and write," says Waterfield, "a comparatively short period when you consider how much time I had to spend in archives and libraries in the States and, of course, in the Lebanon. Luckily, as a result of my academic background, I can do the research

without getting bored. More significantly, though, I believe that, as Plutarch said in the first century AD, 'the understanding of character is what biography should be about.'"

Waterfield first encountered Gibran's work in the late Sixties. "When everyone else did" in the shape of *The Prophet*. "In subsequent years," he says, "it became the sort of book that I'd pick up once in a while, rather like Jonathan Livingstone Seagull. Then, when his works entered the public domain, it made sense to me as a publisher to produce new editions with substantial introductions."

His

remained more poet than philosopher and was seen to be part of the Mahjar school of Neo-Classical Arab poetry. These were Romantic writers who broke with the hitherto strict rules governing that area of Arabic literature. "His exposure to Western culture gave him a strong and enduring taste for personal freedom in both religion and politics," writes Waterfield in the book. "Gibran's gift," he says, "was not necessarily to be exceptional as an Arabic poet, but actually to be able to sit in two camps, to be acceptable to the West as well as to the East. Which is why he was picked up by the West, unlike most of the other Arabic Romantics. Also, though, he may not have been technically that good a poet, whatever else he did put his heart and soul into his work, whereas the others seem slightly more artificial."

For the first time, Waterfield's book establishes Gibran as the founding father of New Age literature. "Gibran's role," he writes, "was to parlay into readily accessible symbols the basic message of the Romantics and Transcendentalists who chiefly influenced him: Black Nietzsche, Rousseau, Maeterlinck, Carpenter, Emerson, Whitman—and transmit them in an easily digestible form to future generations." In Gibran's work, he adds, "all the major New Age ideas are there, and in a more accessible form than, say, Teilhard de Chardin."

He has gone to the trouble, for example, to wade through the lengthy journals of Mary Haskell, the wealthy Boston schoolteacher who took Gibran under her wing in 1904. For a time the two were engaged and Haskell wrote a minutely detailed account of the entire relationship, which yields many interesting observations, such as the example. Waterfield relates of their meetings: He told Mary he was fed up with being Boston high society's performing monkey, something exotic and unusual and liked her immediately because she treated him simply as an individual, and was interested enough in what he had to say to ask pertinent questions."

Towards the end of our discussion I remember an interesting observation of my own, made during my investigation of Waterfield's career to date, which I wish to pursue. Oddly, for a man to whom the word "dialogue" is most likely to signify Socrates, it seems he once accepted a commission to write the script for a "singularity unsuccessful" computer game based on Jeffrey Archer's novel *Not a Penny More, Not a Penny Less*. What was the attraction of Lord Archer's fiction, I want to know. "Oh that," he laughs, agreeably ruffled for an instant. "It wasn't the Archer aspect that intrigued me, I'm afraid, but the chance to compose a computer game." Indeed, Waterfield's current project is an edition of Plato's *Gorgias* for publication on CD-ROM. Already his eyes are shining at the prospect.

Dashed hopes in Hebron

The false teeth that fool no one

By Mark Hubbard

THE BUTCHER opened his wallet and showed me his teeth. Five fine specimens, preserved as evidence to be revealed on the day of reckoning. In his despair, he wondered if that day would ever come. He is not the only one among Palestinians along the West Bank to wonder what the volatile mixture of Israeli government extremism and the corruption and ineptitude of the Palestinian Authority will bring.

The butcher drinking tea at a kiosk at the end of Al-Shuhada Street. Baby-faced Israeli soldiers were gathered beneath a large umbrella eyeing the tea-drinkers and market stall-holders, whose lives international diplomacy has yet to rescue from the knots of the Middle East peace process. The Israelis barked orders at Palestinians wanting to drive the length of the street. The Palestinians struggled with the compliance borne of occupation. Meanwhile, a few hundred yards away, painted starkly on two water towers atop a small hill housing a Jewish settlement, the blue and white Israeli flag dominated the scene.

"I kept my teeth so I could show what it was they did to me. It was the eid el-fitr, the festival to mark the end of Ramadan. I had invited some friends and we were having a party. The Israelis didn't like it. They let off tear gas, thinking we were planning something. They knocked out my teeth with a rifle butt," says the butcher. He now has fine new false teeth. But that is not really the point: cosmetic changes convince nobody.

The cosmetic changes to Al-Shuhada Street occupy two pages of a January 1997 agreement, which saw Israeli troops withdraw from most of Hebron. The US government budgeted \$1.3m to finance a face-lift for the street, so Arab traders could sell goods in the shops which run its length, among which are Jewish houses and a large synagogue. Eventually, the US paid \$2.5m, but still few people go there. Cars need a special pass, and pedestrians are eyed suspiciously by Israeli troops.

The street is like the "sterile zone" of a border crossing. It is a no-man's land, symbolic of the absence of real progress made since 1993, when Israelis and Palestinians agreed to "recognise their mutual legitimate and political rights, and strive

to live in peaceful coexistence and mutual dignity and security."

A large sign above the Jewish settlement in the centre of Hebron says the site was where Jews died in a riot at the hands of Arabs in 1929. The provocation is clear. The Star of David is daubed as graffiti on Arab shops forced to close nearby.

In the neat settlement, my colleague asks the way to the Tomb of the Patriarchs, and an Israeli soldier asks a settler whether we—clearly non-

neer in Jerusalem.

"Now, nobody will rise up to support Arafat from within Palestine. If Arafat had the street behind him, he would be able to forget about Netanyahu and [Madeleine] Albright [US secretary of state]. But Arafat is the only one who can sign contracts. That's what keeps him in power."

Greed has ousted good sense. "I used to work with the authority, but they are not interested in the details of their own decisions," said a Palestinian statistician in a town outside Jerusalem, who resigned when his technical analysis of political decisions was routinely ignored. "For example, they don't seek the views of experts on the impact on land use of the Israeli troop redeployments." Technical details—regarding land, water and infrastructure—which affect the lives of ordinary Palestinians, have failed to absorb the authority's leaders.

Consequently, Israeli negotiators have been able to ensure the country's continuing control of key resources vital to sustaining existing and new Jewish settlements on Arab land. The issue has revealed Arafat's dance around the Palestinians in much of the past five years of negotiations, intensifying Palestinians' resentment of their leaders.

The silencing and intimidation of its own internal critics is one aspect of the authority's response. "But aside from their violence, they're all politics. Everything they do, if I get a permit to work in Jerusalem—which takes months of requests—to the Israelis—the authority comes and takes it from me, saying 'I'm not allowed to have it. So, I'm not allowed to work,'" said another man in Hebron.

"There will be a war among us, between the politicians who came from the outside and the others who were always here," said the butcher.

"It's the corruption of all those around Arafat. Where has all the money gone? All that money that was meant for us. Whatever they say, I don't believe in them. They are not from here. They came from Tunisia when Arafat returned, and they have stolen everything. There will be a war between us and them," he added, a man mired by dashed hopes, the ever-present threat of violence and a growing sense of despair.

Financial Times Syndication

By Kevin Sullivan

DARRA ADAM KHEL, Pakistan—It was just another sleepy Third World morning in the oven-hot desert. Goats gnawed on garbage in the street, donkeys pulled carts, and bony dogs panted under tables where vendors sold bananas that had gone brown days ago.

Then a man stepped out of a shop and fired a shining .45-caliber pistol five times into the air. Another man stood in the street and fired an AK-47 assault rifle toward the sky. Over and over, sellers and buyers tested their guns, and the POP-POP-BANG of pistols and shotguns and automatic weapons rang down the market street into the dusty hills.

This remote village not far from the Afghanistan border is a firearms bazaar. The main street—the only street—is lined with tiny shops and stalls filled with every kind of firearm: Russian Kalashnikovs, American M-16s, Italian Berettas, Israeli Uzis, even guns hidden in walking sticks and ballpoint pens. Many are originals, but most are copies produced in the little mom-and-pop workshops hidden in the back alleys. Every few minutes, gunsmiths test-fire their wares, often standing right in the middle of the people and bikes and carts jamming the street, and not even the dozing dogs flinch.

Pakistan and its regional rival, India, are spending billions on nuclear weapons these days, but plain old guns are still far more deadly—for now, anyway—in these two countries, spilling gallons of blood every day in ethnic and religious conflicts that kill thousands each year.

Darra, a little tribal outpost 25 miles south of Peshawar, once supplied the Afghan mujaheddin rebels in their struggle against Soviet occupation, and guerrillas from Northern Ireland and the Middle East also have bought guns here.

The shops—which offer home delivery anywhere in the country—are the main supplier of guns in the unofficial war raging in the Pakistani provinces of Punjab and Sindh. Police say there are 7,000 AK-47s, mostly from Darra, in Karachi, where ethnic gangs that have turned Pakistan's economic capital into a war zone, killing more than 200 people in the last six weeks alone.

Darra is also the main supplier of guns in Kashmir, where India and Pakistan have engaged in decades of vicious border fighting—making it the most critical flash point between the world's newest nuclear states, analysts say.

Pakistani Mom-and-Pop stores arm the world's guerrillas

In Darra, customers can choose from an amazing abundance of low-price goods, with no questions asked. Darra's gunsmiths say they can produce an exact copy of any gun in a matter of days. In addition to the array of automatic weapons on display, local officials say, Darra's merchants also sell cannons, anti-aircraft guns and grenades. A few US-made Stinger missiles, sent to help the mujaheddin fight the Soviets, are said to be still available here to the discreet buyer.

"Each time we sell one, we know in our minds that these guns are made for the death of human beings," said Syed Ali, 30, who sells more than 1,000 guns a year at the Asia Arms Store, where an AK-47 captured from the Soviet army in Afghanistan goes for about \$320, but almost identical copies made in Darra start at about \$50.

"But this is our only way of earning money," said Ali, standing barefoot on a lovely, blood-red Afghan carpet beneath a poster showing Iraqi leader Saddam Hussein leading tanks and troops into battle. "It's all we have. We don't have cement factories or a flour mill."

Darra is in the middle of the tribal North-West Frontier province, a 200-mile swath of land along the Afghan border. These enclaves were created at the turn of the century by British colonial rulers who decided to leave them under the control of local tribes in exchange for peace. This area, most notably the nearby Khyber Pass,



Haji Waris, left, has been making guns in Darra Adam Khel, Pakistan, for more than 40 years, and he's passing the art along to his children, nephews and cousins who help him in his shop. Photo by Kevin Sullivan

has one of the most violent histories in the world and has been the route of invaders, armies, rebels, smugglers and refugees for centuries.

This frontier land is run by local elders and is almost completely beyond the jurisdiction of the national and provincial governments. The Pakistani constitution does not apply here; instead, the law is doled out according to strict Muslim traditions.

Remarkably, there is very little gun crime. People rarely draw a gun in anger here, because the target almost surely would return fire.

"The keeping of arms doesn't mean killing people," said Arif Mohammad, 27, a local gun dealer, as he sipped sweet tea in a little room behind his shop. "The tribe has huge amounts of guns and ammunition, but we live in peace and harmony."

Perhaps, but the tribes survive by running guns and drugs and harboring outlaws and rebels, and all kinds of characters blow in with the hot desert winds.

Men in traditional Pakistani shalwar kameez, knee-length tunics worn over loose-fitting pants—wander the streets with two or three automatic weapons slung over their shoulders. Rambo-style. Scuffier types walk along with pistols in each hand, eyeing strangers darkly. Children, an important part of Darra's work force, scurry about with guns or gun parts in their tiny hands. Weapons are handled lovingly here. One of the soldiers guarding a foreign guest had pretty silver ornaments that looked like earrings hanging from the sight of his Kalashnikov.

"Do you remember Texas in the old days? That's what Darra is like," said Faizal Qazi, editor of the *Khyber Mail* newspaper. "Guns are just part of their culture. They eat with them, sleep with them, and they celebrate their functions while firing in the air. Guns are like an ornament."

Darra may have nothing but guns, but that is more than most neighboring villages, which have just nothing. By conservative estimates, the Darra market sells 50 guns a day—more than 18,000 a year—and that has been enough to make these villagers about the richest little collection of mud-brick dwellers in Pakistan. Hashish and, to a lesser extent, heroin, are

also for sale here, which has added handsomely to the local coffers.

Now the government wants a piece of the action. The national and provincial governments are exploring ways to regulate the gun trade in Darra, bringing it out of the black market and into the bright light of the regular economy. Officials feel there is money to be made from Darra's expertise and that government endorsement could clean up this industry and make it a player in markets beyond the rebel-and-outlaw arena.

Many think the government plans are unrealistic, but the independent-minded gun dealers of Darra say they are interested. "We want to compete in the international markets, and if we get government recognition, support and protection, we can do that," said Arif Mohammad. "Right now, we are not able to pay our expenses. In the past, there was the Afghan war and there was a lot of demand. But there is no such big activity now, so sales are not that good."

Importing raw materials into the tribal areas is difficult because of the shadier aspects of the gun trade and because of Darra's unique, beyond-the-government status. Darra's gunsmiths often must use substandard steel and other materials in their weapons. That lowers quality, which is fine with some of Darra's shadier customers, but it keeps the village from promoting its wares to a more legitimate clientele. "If they regulate this industry, there will be more job opportunities, especially for the young," said Syed Ali of the Asia Arms Store.

Haji Waris, 60, has been making guns in Darra for more than 40 years. He's one of the village's elder craftsmen, and he's passing the art along to his children, nephews and cousins who help him in his dark little shop. At the moment, Waris is most proud of what he described as a personal invention—a shotgun that works like a revolver, with a chamber that holds six shells. The shooter can squeeze off all six shots without reloading.

Waris, who wears a long white beard, said he hopes that the government might someday even be a customer for Darra's guns, but that maybe the best thing the government can do for Darra is to founder. "If the government is not stable," he said, with mischief in his eyes, "then business is good."

LA Times-Washington Post News Service

Crisis in Kosovo

The current conflict in Kosovo mirrors the plight of ethnic Albanians in the former Yugoslavia. As human rights violations continue, Amnesty International calls for effective reparations for all victims. Mark Lattimer and Susie Wright report



Women and children seek refuge from the ongoing conflict in Kosovo

AT 3 o'clock in the afternoon of 11 February 1994, three police jeeps and an official car suddenly arrived in the village of Donja Lapastica in Kosovo province in Yugoslavia. Some 15 armed police officers and two state security officers got out and surrounded a group of houses.

The statement of a local resident, Ali Murat Murati, recounts what happened next. "At the old house four or five police officers and two state security officers began to carry out a search and to ill-treat members of the family. They took hold of me as I was standing on the staircase of the old house with members of my family and led me some 50 to 60 metres away into the new house. As soon as they brought me inside, they began to threaten me in the most brutal way, demanding that I hand over weapons, pistols, guns, automatic rifles. I told them repeatedly that I did not possess any arms and they could carry out a detailed search."

They began to beat him, one after another, five or six of them, without stopping, for about an hour, until he lost consciousness. Ali Murat was lucky to survive. He is 90 years old.

Members of the six-nation Contact Group on the former Yugoslavia will probably never hear of Ali Murat. But they ought to, because his story and those of other ethnic Albanians in Kosovo going back ten years hold the key to understanding the events that are unfolding today.

Kosovo is a province of Serbia, which itself is part of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. However, 90 per cent of the people in Kosovo province are ethnic Albanians, speaking a completely different language to the Serb population.

In 1989 the effective autonomy of Kosovo province within Serbia was ended by constitutional changes. When Albanian deputies of the Kosovo parliament declared Kosovo independent of the Republic of Serbia a year later, the Serbian parliament suspended the parliament in Kosovo. The man who, appealing to Serbian national sentiment, led the reassertion of Serbian control over Kosovo was someone who was still relatively unknown outside of Yugoslavia: Slobodan Milosevic.

The majority of ethnic Albanians refused to recognise Serbian authority in the province and supported the demand of the Democratic League of Kosovo (LDK) for the independence, by peaceful means, of the province from Yugoslavia. Ethnic Albanians claim that some 4,000 ethnic Albanian police officers were dismissed from their posts after 1990 after refusing to accept the measures introduced in Kosovo by the Serbian government. As the confrontation continued, officers of the now largely Serbian police force increasingly resorted to the routine use of violence.

In 1992 at least 16 ethnic Albanians died after being shot by police in disputed circumstances. In one incident, Bajram Hoxhaj, Muharrem Hysenaj and Hasan Hysenaj died from gunshot wounds in the village of Uce on January 31. Ethnic Albanians alleged that police had arrested three school children and then opened fire on members of their families who wanted them back.

In 1993, Amnesty International recognised as prisoners of conscience some 50 ethnic Albanians who were sentenced to imprisonment for non-violent political activity. These included three people who each got 40 days in prison for organising a concert to celebrate Albania's national day in November.

What must be done, Amnesty International believes that any lasting solution to the present crisis must clearly address the

need for durable guarantees for human rights protection; the accountability of those responsible for past and present human rights violations by police and security forces; and effective reparations for all victims of human rights violations.

1. The cycle of impunity for human rights abuses in the former Yugoslavia must be stopped. The jurisdiction of the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia extends to Kosovo province and the international community should assist the tribunal in its efforts to investigate the situation in Kosovo province and prosecute breaches of humanitarian law and crimes against humanity.

2. States should honour their obligations under international law to allow access to their territories to those fleeing in search of safety. The international com-

munity should share responsibility for those in need of protection, and all states should suspend the return of any rejected asylum seekers to Kosovo.

3. The international community, and particularly members of the UN Security Council, should condemn the violations of human rights and humanitarian law in Kosovo and commit themselves to providing support to an enlarged human rights monitoring programme of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR).

Human rights abuses by police in Kosovo province continued to escalate. By 1994, human rights activists in Kosovo were reporting many incidents of police violence every day. Punching, kicking and beating with truncheons were the most common forms of abuse, but

there were also reports of electric shocks being used by police officers.

An 18-year old secondary school pupil, Arian Curri, was on his way home by bus when, on the outskirts of the town of Pec, police boarded the bus and arrested him.

Two police officers entered the bus and began to check the identity cards of the passengers. I was at the back of the bus. I saw them take out two young men through the front door. When they reached me, they asked me for my identity card. I gave it to them, and then one of the officers suddenly grabbed me by the hair and pulled me out of the bus.

They handcuffed me and put me in their car. They took all three of us to the police station. They led us inside and separated us. They took me into a room and then the beating and torture began. Next they tied

me to a radiator and three police officers sat on me; one of them pulled out a knife and after he had pulled up my shirt he cut a cross with the Cyrillic 'S'. The cross and four Cyrillic 'S's carved into Arian's chest stand for the Serbian motto: 'Only Unity Saves the Serb'.

The systematic record of human rights abuses in Kosovo province, in which over the years thousands of ethnic Albanians had been subjected to beatings, torture and ill-treatment, and hundreds imprisoned after unfair trials, left a dangerous legacy of resentment. Attacks on Serbian police or those associated with the authorities occurred with increasing frequency after 1996, responsibility for many of them claimed by the Kosovo Liberation Army (the Democratic League of Kosovo) emphasises it has no connection with the

KLA). After clashes in November 1997, the police and security forces have attempted to restrict the KLA's movements in an area of Kosovo province called Drenica.

The international condemnation for what is happening in Kosovo province is primarily a response to the rapidly deteriorating security situation in Drenica. Fearing an enlarged conflict in the Balkans, the international community has warned Yugoslavian President Slobodan Milosevic that it will not tolerate 'another Bosnia.' But the roots of the Kosovo crisis predate the armed conflict in Bosnia, and the current situation cannot be isolated from a decade of unaddressed human rights violations in Kosovo province.

And those violations are multiplying at an alarming rate. Recent Serbian operations, although directed at the Kosovo Liberation Army, have led to hundreds of civilian deaths, many apparently a result of deliberate or indiscriminate attacks. Attacks on civilians have been part of the reason why more than 60,000 people have fled their homes.

Allegations of human rights violations are of course still met with denials. The role of hard evidence is vital in ensuring that the scale of violations cannot be forgotten or sidelined by the international community, and that the current cycle of impunity for the gravest crimes in the former Yugoslavia is broken.

Ali Murat was prepared to ensure that the story of what happened to him went on the record. Despite the indignity of being photographed naked, he knew the value of evidence. "The medical examination, certificate and photographs are proof that they caused me severe bodily harm and endangered my life."

Ali's case is now one of many thousands. The evidence is mounting up. Who out there is listening?

A brief history of Kosovo province. 1389: Serbs suffer defeat by the Turks at the Battle of Kosovo Polje, and become part of the Ottoman Empire. 1878: The League of Prizren is founded in Kosovo, marking the beginning of the Albanian national revival. 1912: Serbs bring Ottoman rule to an end in the 1912 Balkan War. 1974: Kosovo province is given considerable autonomy, including its own government, parliament and supreme court in the 1974 Constitution of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. 1981: State of emergency declared, following widespread demonstrations in Kosovo by Albanian nationalists, demanding that the province be given full republican status. 1990: Kosovo parliament and government suspended by the Serbian parliament after ethnic Albanian deputies of the Kosovo parliament declare Kosovo independent of the Republic of Serbia. Kosovo's ethnic Albanians start to establish parallel institutions, including a parliament, a president, taxation and their own education system. 1995: Dayton peace deal agreed not covering Kosovo province. 1996: Attacks on Serbian police and Serbs or Albanians associated with the authorities increase. Oct 1997: Serbian police allegedly beat around 350 people, including student demonstrators. Nov 1997: Serbian operations intensify in Drenica, following clashes with the Kosovo Liberation Army. Feb-Jun 1998: Serbian operations leave hundreds of civilians dead, many apparently a result of deliberate or indiscriminate attacks. 60,000 people flee their homes.

One World Online

Chernomyrdin sets sights on the Presidency

Russian prime minister Victor Chernomyrdin discusses his achievements, his fall from grace and his plans for the future with Chyristia Freeland

AS VICTOR Chernomyrdin, Russia's former prime minister and now a candidate for the presidency, settles himself into a chair next to mine, my heart sinks.

It's not that he's an hour late: I have come five minutes late and am relieved not to have kept such an august person waiting. What horrifies me is that, as he rests his elbows on the bare boardroom-style table, laid out only with plastic flowers and a few bottles of mineral water, Chernomyrdin clearly has no intention of eating lunch.

I was afraid of this. Breaking bread with a mere journalist is an unusual concept for a Russian leader of Chernomyrdin's vintage. Moreover, his handlers had warned that the ex-premier would be unable to select a favourite restaurant for our meeting. "After a lifetime in the nomenclature he hardly knows what a public restaurant is," and so we had settled on dining at his office.

But some nervous functionary has obviously failed to pass on this weird western request and so, taking a deep breath, I launch into a panicked explanation of my mission. At last, understanding, of a sort, dawns.

"Ah, you're hungry? No problem. I haven't eaten lunch either and this will save me time. Let's go."

With that, Chernomyrdin whisks me into the modest, windowless cubby-hole, which serves as his private dining room. I had expected something grander. Until he was abruptly dropped from the cabinet in March, Chernomyrdin was the second most powerful person in Russia and a man with the rather autocratic tastes of his political caste. He caused a scandal a few years ago when the media uncovered his fondness for winter bear-hunting, complete with a small army of courtiers to rouse the beasts from hibernation.

Chernomyrdin himself is the second surprise. Deeply tanned, smiling and voluble, he looks younger than his 60 years and almost unrelated to the wooden prime minister known chiefly for his dullness and tortured, barely comprehensible syntax.

As we are served our first course, a homely Russian salad of sliced cucumbers, a few lettuce leaves and a dollop of smetana—a heavy, slightly sour cream—an comment on his vigour. It is clearly not an

original observation.

"Everyone says that, they all ask me, 'What's happened to you?'" he replies. "I haven't taken a holiday, I was up at 4.30 this morning and I'm constantly travelling. But it's not the burden I once had [in government]. It's a huge country. Floods, fires, accidents. You worry, you make phone calls, you sort things out. I can't say I really enjoyed it."

His previous job as fuel and energy minister had offered more personal satisfaction. It was here that he had his greatest accomplishment: transforming the Soviet natural gas industry into Gazprom, a partially privatised behemoth which is Russia's biggest company.

"I was the head of the sector; it was interesting. I created it, built it up, trained everyone. For me, that job was like a song," Chernomyrdin says, happily waving his knife around for emphasis.

His affection for Gazprom has earned him the censure of Rusof for offering unfair perks to his comrades in the gas sector, and it is argued that the very existence of such a huge company—controlling more than a third of the world's natural gas reserves—distorted Russia's nascent market economy.

But Chernomyrdin sees Gazprom, and his role as its founder, in a different light. Indeed, you can almost hear the presidential campaign speech that will be delivered in 2000, as he insists that Gazprom was a pioneering experiment in market reform and he was the visionary behind it.

"I am the man who did that [first moved to the market]," he says. "Already in 1988, I transformed the government industry into a company and I myself left the cabinet. I was the first to do this in the [Soviet] Union, the first. I understood even then that we had reached a dead end. A dead end."

In fact, Chernomyrdin argues that it was he, the weathered, hands-on industrialist, who spearheaded Russia's market transformation and not the radical young academics brought in by Russian president Boris Yeltsin in 1992 to apply "shock therapy" to the ailing centrally planned economy.

Warning to his theme as we move on to okroshka, a chilled, tangy meat and vegetable soup which is a Russian summertime favourite, he insists: "I had already begun

to work in the market when he [Yegor Gaidar, the arch-liberal who headed Russia's first, post-communist cabinet] was still sitting in Kommunist [a theoretical journal Gaidar edited in the late 1980s] and writing party articles."

"But Chernomyrdin, at that same time, was saving Gazprom, preparing it for market conditions. That's the difference between us. History will judge."

Nor is the former premier immune to feelings of schadenfreude, as he watches his successors struggle to defend the rouble and the Russian financial system against a rumbling crisis which has halved the value of equities since the beginning of the year.

To rescue the economy, the new government is trying to win an emergency bail-out loan of \$10bn-\$15bn from the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and other western creditors. The IMF has been decidedly chilly about Moscow's request, but Chernomyrdin implies that, last year, the money was his for the asking.

"When the first wave of the Asian crisis came we insured ourselves with the IMF, and, under various conditions and guarantees, we agreed all the details of a \$10bn loan," he says.

"We needed the right to borrow this money. So we made this deal. It was at the end of November or the beginning of December."

This story of such a private deal footnotes the last months of Chernomyrdin's five-year tenure as head of the cabinet.

Losing that post must have been difficult. The loss was compounded by the particularly brutal way in which Yeltsin dispensed with his long-serving ally, abruptly summoning him to his dacha on a Saturday afternoon and telling him that on Monday, March 23, he would be sacked.

How did it feel?

Chernomyrdin claims to have taken his fall from grace stoically. "I've worked as a leader for many years and I always trained myself to be prepared for the worst. So all those who thought I would fall into a deep

depression or begin beating my breast in hysterics, they were wrong."

Now, though, he hopes to turn the tables on those nay-sayers, and perhaps enjoy a little bit of historical revenge against Yeltsin, by conquering the Kremlin himself.

Although his bid is backed by much of Russia's corporate establishment including, of course, his beloved creation, Gaz-

prom, many observers are sceptical of Chernomyrdin's ability to make it at the ballot box.

He seems to lack the flesh-pressing zeal of an instinctive politician and the fire in the belly which drives a man like Yeltsin to overcome his own physical frailty in order to reassert, time after time, his political dominance.

Worse yet, at least in the popular imagination, Chernomyrdin is the quintessential

representative of the old regime, a talented apparatchik whose skill at operating in the Soviet system raised him up from an obscure Siberian village to the Central Committee of the CPSU.

But, perhaps in an early effort to reshape his image for the hustings, Chernomyrdin tells a rather different story about his personal evolution—a Horatio Alger tale of a hard-working farm boy for whom the principles of capitalism are a happy return to the values of his childhood home.

"I'm an ordinary peasant boy, from an ordinary peasant school, in an ordinary village without any relatives in high places. I did everything myself," he says, as we move on to mashed potatoes and boiled tongue, the main course of a meal which confirms that—at least gastronomically—the ex-premier is faithful to the humble tastes of his childhood.

"A boy from the village and suddenly I became the prime minister. We had a cow, pigs, chickens. We were five children and each had his chores. It taught me an important thing: How you work will be how you live."

This peasant commonsense, he believes, should become the basis of Russia's fledgling market economy. "If you work, you prosper. If you don't, you don't. This is the chief principle of our current market system."

It is clearly a favourite theme, and he carries on in this vein for several minutes, eventually drifting into a denunciation of the evils of communism. "They destroyed everything, they destroyed the best people, they destroyed the peasants."

I happen to agree. But wasn't Chernomyrdin himself a communist and one of the builders of the now reviled system?

For just a moment, the question seems to be enough to re-evolve the tongue-tied Chernomyrdin of old. "We were all like that. And how. We were all the same. We are all children of one time. But we were all different."

Financial Times Syndication

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'A cry for nature'

The Royal Society for the Conservation of Nature are involved in a number of projects to preserve Jordan's natural heritage. Ghassan Joha spoke to the Society about their campaign to increase public awareness of the need for environmental protection

THE impact of development on the environment is of growing global concern. Economic development, industrialization, and an increasing number of factories are a key source of pollution today. The atmosphere has become so clogged that it is causing the rapid depletion of the ozone layer.

Jordan is fortunate to have such a rich architectural and natural heritage. Protecting our heritage, however, should not be limited to tourism investment or handicraft production. Environmental protection and conservation is equally important.

In the past 70 years Jordanian officials have become more aware of the need for environmental protection and conservation. The first Forestry Law was legislated in 1923. However, it was only in 1966 with the establishment of the Royal Society for the Conservation of Nature (RSCN) that work in this area began in earnest.

The society, under Royal patronage, has been given special responsibilities to conserve nature in the Kingdom. Earlier in May, it launched its 'A Cry for Nature' campaign to spotlight the urgent need for environmental action by alerting people to the plight of their natural heritage.

"Since its foundation, the RSCN's main objectives have been to organize, control and conserve wildlife habitats in Jordan by promoting understanding of the natural environment, the need to protect it and its interdependence with people," Khalid Irani, director general of the RSCN, told The Star.

He pointed out that the RSCN wants to mobilize people and institutions to take action to lay the basis for a

sustainable future. This can't be done without rules and regulations to increase awareness among people.

"We need to control bird hunting and sheep grazing in our country to preserve extinct species and prevent grass-covered grounds from soil erosion," Mr Irani added.

Currently predictions estimate that the rate of extinction over the next century could be as high as 35,000 species a year. The lowest predictions on 17,000 species per year.

These are based on numerous studies that show the 'knock-on effect' of the destruction of the world's natural habitats over the last 50 years. Jordan has not escaped the destruction.

"Our dry and fragile land is very vulnerable to the impact of a rapidly growing population and increasing development," said Chris Johnson,

RSCN director of conservation.

He told The Star that Jordanians aren't fully aware of their environmental and cultural wealth and why it matters. "Nature creates economy," he stressed. "There are many natural factors and species still undiscovered which can be potentially damaged because of bad management by civilians."

Today the RSCN supervises six natural reserves that cover over 1,000 square kilometers in the Kingdom. They are the Al Shomari, Mujib, Dana, Azraq, Zubiya and the Rum Valley reserves. Eight more nature reserves will come under the supervision of the society in the near future.

The RSCN has breeding programs for the endangered Oryx, and for Ibex, Ostrich and Onager. "More and more of Jordan's finest natural areas are being irreparably damaged, harming not only nature but also the health and social well-being of people," Mr Irani said.

The RSCN launched its campaign because of the need to preserve biological diversity. Over the last 90 years, many mammals, birds and plant species have become extinct in Jordan.

Jordan is a strategic stopping point on the world's major bird migration routes, but it has lost many of its bird habitats. "Hunting is a big issue in our campaign. There must be strict regulations and action must be taken immediately to

ban the use of machine guns in inappropriate places," Mr Johnson stated.

Everybody must take the blame if our nature continues to be depleted, better provision must be made to protect the environment under Jordanian law, not just in nature reserves but to prevent the practice of inappropriate land-use, especially in agriculture.

In 1994 the RSCN established the Dana project to integrate the conservation of wildlife with the social and economic development of the local community. The Dana reserve can be regarded as Jordan's first major experiment in eco-tourism.

"Thousands of tourists ignore the unknown potential of nature and so harm its values," Mr Johnson added.

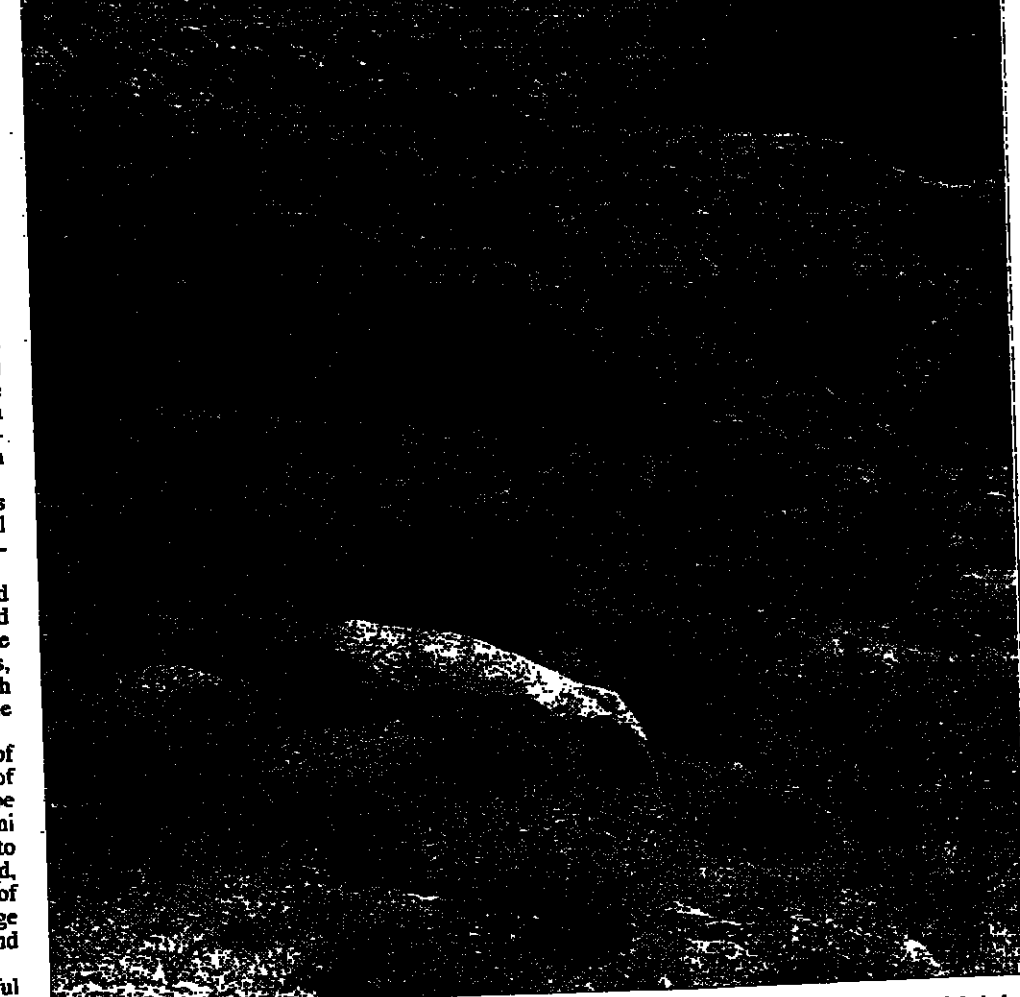
These values need a loud voice and this can be achieved by involving friends of nature (RSCN members) in projects, workshops and through increased contact with the media.

"When you talk on behalf of hundreds or thousands of members, your voice will be louder and stronger," Mr Irani explained, urging the public to join the RSCN. He added, "We encourage members of Parliament to carry the message of nature conservation and solve environmental issues."

One example of successful cooperation between the public and RSCN took place in the city of Fuhais, where pollution found its own extinction.

Cement was causing a serious threat to people's health in the city and to the environment. The Society, in cooperation with city officials, took action by bringing in foreign environmental specialists to force the Jordanian Cement Factories (JCE) to conform to acceptable environmental standards.

"The people of Fuhais were very aware and anxious about the environment, which encouraged us to go ahead and



The beauty of the Dana National Reserve

Photo by Yannick Laine

oblige the JCE to change their attitudes," Mr Johnson pointed out. But the JCE isn't the only one in the environmental equation.

"Fuhais suffers from different types of pollution—there is waste from other factories, mining works and bad pasturing," Adep Akrouh, director of the RSCN branch in Fuhais, told The Star.

Since the opening of the Fuhais branch of the RSCN in 1994, Akrouh has been at the forefront of environmental

protection. In 1997 the RSCN stopped lorries and heavy vehicles from either entering the city or transferring any cargo through it as further measure of protecting people and the environment from pollution.

"We hope that the wastewater network will be finished soon to complete our plan of keeping the city clean and healthy," Mr Akrouh said.

Adding, "The RSCN wants to build a car tunnel between Fuhais and Amman in the Baccalaureate School area." He states that this would ease the traffic flow in general and reduce the pollution in the area.

A new board was formed recently in the Fuhais branch to discuss such plans and all environmental issues for the benefit of the city.

Board members include officials from the Fuhais Municipality, the RSCN, the Environment Society and the Fuhais Cultural Club. ■



The Arabian Leopard disappeared from Jordan 70 years ago

Pepsico acquires exclusive bottling company in Jordan



AMMAN — As part of a broad investment plan aimed at growing Pepsi's leadership position in Jordan's soft drink market, PepsiCo announced today it has acquired its exclusive bottler in Jordan — Jordan Ice & Aerated Water Co. Ltd.

PepsiCo's investment will be used to expand the bottling operation's sales, production and distribution capacity to meet the demand for its Pepsi, Mirinda, and 7UP products in this rapidly growing market.

Saad Abdul Latif, President and General Manager of Pepsi-Cola International, Middle East, North Africa and Pakistan, said: "With more than two thirds of the population under 25, Jordan is a very attractive market in which Pepsi is the number one soft drink brand, with a share of around 80 per cent. Our investment will add fuel to the strong momentum Pepsi enjoys in the marketplace and greatly enhanced our ability to continue to reach customers and consumers in new ways, as we head into the next millennium."

Nearly 90 per cent of Jordanian consumers list Pepsi soft drinks as their favorite brands. This tremendous popularity is also enjoyed across the Middle East where Pepsi is the market leader, outselling its nearest competitor 2:1.

"Pepsi is the Jordanian consumers' favorite soft drink brand. With our new ownership of this bottling company, we are very confident that we can continue to develop the market and grow our leadership position," said Saad Abdul Latif.

Pepsi has been available in Jordan since 1963 and has bottling plants in Amman and Irbid, employing over 1,000 staff.

Pepsi-Cola, celebrating its centenary worldwide, is the number one soft drink company in the Middle East, where two out of every three consumers choose Pepsi, outselling its nearest competitor by 2:1. Pepsi-Cola has operated in the Middle East continuously for over 45 years, offering a range of quality products — Pepsi, Diet Pepsi, 7UP, Diet 7UP, Mirinda, Mountain Dew, Shani and Teem—through a regional network of exclusive Pepsi franchised bottlers.

Pepsi-Cola Company, the global beverage division of PepsiCo, is based in Somers, New York. The company's products are available in more than 190 countries and territories worldwide. ■

And the rains came to Kutai....

By Harry Surjadi

KUTAI NATIONAL PARK, INDONESIA — Anyone who has ever been to a rain forest knows that it is among the noisiest places on earth. You can hear the cacophony of a thousand insects, birds, monkeys and deer, added to the roar of waterfalls.

But a stillness hangs over the Kutai National Park, the 1,98,000-hectare natural forest in Kalimantan—the largest of the 17,000 islands of the Indonesian archipelago and home to most of the tropical rain forests in the region.

In April this year, the forests of Kutai were devastated by fire. And although it has begun to rain in June, it is still so quiet here, you can almost hear yourself breathe.

"Only rain can put out these fires," fire-fighter Ludwig Schindler had said in April. Schindler, head of the Integrated Forest Fire Management Project, has been helping the Forest Department in East Kalimantan under a bilateral agreement between Indonesia and the German Agency for Technical Cooperation.

He was right about the rains. After experimenting with expensive high-tech solutions such as spraying water from planes, it is the rains that appear to be working—the fire has largely died out in Kutai National Park, according to locals.

But the rains at best offer a temporary respite, because some important causes of the forest-fires lie elsewhere, such as in the Indonesian government's land use policy and land tenure system, says Schindler.

According to the government's Environmental Impact Management Agency, the areas most affected by fires in East Kalimantan were those that had been cleared for forest concessions—land handed over to timber companies for logging—and those converted to agricultural land for cash crops. Together they amounted to an area of 307,000 hectares.

Also severely affected were 11,000 hectares of former concession areas, which have been abandoned by timber merchants after logging and where the government is supposed to replant trees.

Forest fires in Indonesia are almost always caused by human activity—mostly the result of shifting cultivation of slash-and-burn techniques used by forest dwellers to clear agricultural land. But fire is also used by plantation companies because it is considered the cheapest way to clear the land and prepare and fertilize the soil for cash crops such as

palm oil and rubber.

The use of fire to clear forest land is officially forbidden, but the ban is routinely violated by plantation and timber companies.

Shifting cultivation is not new—the Dayak people, an indigenous tribe in Kalimantan, have been using the method for centuries. But, unlike the companies, they have strict traditional rules governing the use of fire

unlike plantation companies, who tend to burn large areas at a time, the Dayaks practice controlled slash-and-burn.

Usually, the Dayaks clear one or two hectares of forest land per year per family. One this they plant a mix of food and cash crops such as rice, fruits, rubber and rattan. This is farmed for two to five years. After that period, the Dayaks plant some fruit and other forest

It is difficult to see the Government changing its policy in the current economic climate. Crisis-hit Indonesia needs foreign exchange more than ever before to repay its foreign debt. So more and more forests look likely to be converted to cash crop plantations.

Indonesia earned about 3.8 billion dollars last year from timber product exports such as plywood, which is sold to Japan, Korea, the United States, Europe and West Asia. It also exports pulp and paper, rattan and rattan products and furniture.

Sadly, government officers rarely pause to consider why forests managed by local communities do not seem to be on fire. Why, for instance, did 20,000 hectares of resin forest managed by local people in South Sumatra not burn while surrounding forests were on fire?

The answer may lie in the tenure system. According to Indonesia's forestry law of 1967, all forests are owned by the Government, which has the right to convert forest land, change its use or transfer that right to a private company. It means that the Government does not recognize the traditional rights of indigenous people over the forests in which they live.

Not only that, the new beneficiaries (including a large number of retired army generals) had the right to clear the land to indigenous people. Not surprisingly, therefore, when forests burn many locals prefer to stand and watch. "It is not our forests anymore," they seem to say. "Why should we care?"

Welcome as they are, the rains in Kutai will not last for ever. Although grass will soon cover the land and some of the surviving trees may bloom, the dry season is just around the corner and no one can say how long that will last.

Environmentalists say it will take decades—maybe 100 years—for the Kutai National Park to regain its natural beauty. Locals say the Government should re-evaluate its forest management policy, grant land-rights to indigenous people and stop converting forests into cash crop plantations.

"The Government should give more right to the local people if it wants to protect forests from fire," says Dayak anthropologist Simon Devang.

Then the Kutai National Park may become a noisy place once more. ■



Forest fires in Indonesia ravished large areas and polluted the region with a lingering smog

For example, Dayaks in Tanjung village in West Kalimantan have specific village laws for preventing the spread of fire on traditional agricultural land. Unlike national or modern legal institutions, which are based on exacting monetary compensation, the village rules emphasize "social and spiritual balance," villagers say.

The main unit of sanction is pakul which comprises two offerings of rice and tobacco, a chicken egg and a bottle of traditional rice beer or wine. If this offering is not made, villagers say, the spiritual imbalance can cause bad harvests, accidents, sickness or fire.

In addition, the Dayaks have their own traditional knowledge of how to control fires. And

trees on the land before leaving it unused for up to 30 years.

In contrast the government, far from emulating the Dayak example, is planning to implement an extensive forest conversion policy which could well lead to more forest fires. Its plans include converting 400,000 hectares of forest land every year to cash crops or timber plantations.

Environmentalists fear the forest conversion program cannot be implemented without fires for clearance. This is because the area is huge, and using fire makes economic sense.

"This policy needs to be revised immediately. If not, forest-fires will recur every year," says Schindler.

Secrets of the Souq

Souq Al Boukhareya is not just a market. It is a vibrant living museum that must be preserved. Itisam Awadat retraced its history.

By Itisam Awadat
Star Staff Writer

THERE ARE places which keep historical moments and events alive. In Jordan, Souq Al Boukhareya offers customers and visitors a free but valuable trip into the past, and a unique insight into the economic and social life early this century. It is a living museum of old architectural design.

Semi-precious stones, traditional daggers only manufactured by the Houshan and Moheesen families (who lived in the north of the Kingdom and specialized in the making of these products for generations) adorn the place, and are a true reminder of a time when handicrafts played a greater part in people's lives, and were not merely used to decorate the empty corners of their homes.

Once oriental works of art and many extraordinary goods could only be found at this Souq (a small market). Today, Al Boukhareya, the most ancient trading center in the Kingdom, is crying out for attention.

Boukhara which was occupied by the Soviet Union, but achieved its independence in 1991. The first campaign of emigration set out to the Holy Lands from Saudi Arabia in 1900, to escape from the Belshish regime in their region, and many chose Jordan to settle down and rebuild their

lives.

The story of the souq began when Mr. Kamal Al Deen Al Boukhari arrived to the country in 1928. "At the beginning, we took Sall Amman as the center and we established a simple souq at the site of the Great Hussein Mosque," said Mohammed Al Boukhari, a trader and the son of Kamal Al Deen. After the construction of the mosque, the owner of the souq searched for another place. "My father suggested we establish the souq in Al Mufti residence opposite the mosque," he said.

Mr. Kamal who ran into financial problems at the beginning of his big project, received financial contributions from three distinguished businessmen—Shakeeb Khorfan, Abd Al Salam Al Tabbaa and Mohammed Ameen Merai.

The new project was founded in 1942 with a few shops, then after the emigration from Palestine in 1948 following the Israeli occupation, some people from Boukhara began to invest in the site," the Boukharian trader said.

Following in the footsteps of his trader ancestors, the founder of the souq bred silkworms which he traded. "The



most ancient trade route in history, the Silk Road, began in Italy and ended in our region, Boukhara." Naturally the people of Boukhara were traders. The goods in the souq used to come from the surrounding regions. "We followed the system of exchange—people brought animal products and grains, especially the Bedouin, then in return, they chose items displayed at the market," Mohammed added.

The souq is considered the core of Jordanian trade. In the 1950s, however, to meet increasing demand, traders

began to import their goods from all over the world, and another market was established on the second floor of the building.

The souq has a unique feature which can not be found anywhere else—it's the only traditional market where pilgrims heading to Mecca can find everything they need for their journey, from clothes to perfumes, beads (rosary) and many other things. "The quality we is as good as in Saudi Arabia, so Moslems can buy extra presents on their way back if they didn't buy enough presents there," Mohammed explained.

Unfortunately, Souq Al Boukhareya lost many of his customers since the Turks stopped passing through Amman on their way to the pilgrimage. Amman is now excluded from their itinerary. Businessmen in the souq wish to receive some assistance from the Ministry of Tourism. "Officials could insert at least one visit to the traditional souqs in Jordan onto the tourist group programs," Boukhari added. Longing for the old days, traders in the souq remember the visits of King Abdalla to the souq after he finished his Friday prayer. ■



Photo by Mahmoud Shavkat

Putting works in their mouths

By Beverly Beyette

FOR DENTAL technician Ron Grant, life is hardly the same old grind.

Grant, 47, of Murrieta, Calif., is the Modigliani of molars. In his hands, a porcelain crown is a blank canvas just waiting to accommodate Mickey Mouse or a monarch butterfly, a college logo or an American eagle. Smile—and the world will learn your little secret.

It started 15 years ago when Grant painted a heart for his mother's crown, "just kind of a novelty thing." As dentist told dentist, patient told patient, the idea caught on.

Today, Grant says, several hundred of his paintings are in Southern California mouths. One of his early, and most challenging, commissions was for Paul Conrad, editorial cartoonist for the Los Angeles Times Syndicate. He wanted a Richard Nixon caricature on the crown on one back molar, a Ronald Reagan on the other. "The Nixon tooth proved to be as rotten as Nixon," Conrad observes, "and it fell out. But Ron's still healthy."

Conrad, whose dentist had told him about Grant's work, drew the caricatures "as simply as I could" for the artist to copy and was pleased. And whatever happened to the Richard Nixon crown? Conrad says, "I think my dentist was going to make a pin out of it."



Among the most unusual commissions was a young woman's request for a marijuana leaf. "I told her I didn't know what one looked like, so she drew a picture," Grant asked to questions.

Then there was the "CEO type" who asked Grant to paint an obscene gesture. "Evidently he had some poor feelings for someone and he could just smile and..."

Why do people want pictures on their molars? "I guess it's like you're getting away with something that nobody else really knows about," Grant says. "When it gets too close to the front, they're a little reluctant."

But not the longshoreman who had Grant paint an American flag on the crown that

was "right on his front tooth." Grant's clients range in age from 20 to 60. His youngest was a 13-year-old boy needing a crown. "His mom said he wouldn't kick and scream too much if he could have something put on his tooth. He had a little soccer ball."

A dental technician for 20 years, Grant the artist is self-taught. At work in "Eye Teeth," his home lab, he painstakingly copies images onto porcelain, working with a worn-out brush with a few bristles on it and a triple magnification loupe.

Although he'll paint on crowns made by other technicians, he'd rather not. The process, which evolved through "trial and error," starts with mixing the china paints. As he

paints, Grant sets the colors by repeatedly baking the crown at 1600 degrees in an oven with a vacuum chamber that pulls out the air and makes the surface nonporous.

When a painting is finished, Grant applies a transparent porcelain glaze—"It's like the glass that covers the painting." And it ensures that the paint, although nontoxic, isn't going to seep into the client's mouth.

"There are no health concerns," says Murrieta dentist Larry Hoyt. "It's completely safe. And, if they decide at some time they do not want it on their teeth anymore, it can be polished off."

So far, Hoyt adds, "I haven't had to remove any. Anybody who's had them thoroughly enjoys them"—so long as they're not too obvious.

Tooth art is not for everyone. It can only be done on crowns or porcelain veneers, not on teeth. And it's definitely a luxury item. The miniature works of art take Grant from two to four hours and range in price from \$200 to \$400, crown not included.

He is not the only tooth Titan. But Grant's wife, Chris, who has a rose on a molar and a bouquet of tulips on a bicuspid, says that although perhaps 50 others throughout the country are doing tooth art, "You're talking shopping at Sears versus Neiman Marcus."

As her husband's unofficial marketing director, she's spurred him to paint the logos of the Denver Broncos, the Chicago Bulls, the Utah Jazz and other professional sports teams—and sent a sample to the flamboyant Dennis Rodman. She reasons, "All these guys are tattooed and pierced."

And, Grant observes, hockey players should be a natural—all those crowns. ■

Mickey Mouse. Hoyt's daughter-in-law, Kristine, who in 1982-83 portrayed Snow White at Disneyland, sports a Snow White on a molar—just because it's "kind of silly and fun." It was copied by Grant from an old Snow White record album Kristine found in an antique shop and, she says, "he did a really good job. It's amazing because it's so tiny, but so detailed."

Lori Wright has Winnie-the-Pooh painted on a bicuspid, strategically placed so that "I don't have to show people" unless there's a reason to do so. Grant's creation—Winnie reaching out for a bumble bee—is "fantastic," says Wright.

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LA Times-Washington Post
News Service

Music to soothe, music to heal

Music therapy has become a recognized way of rehabilitating people suffering from disabilities or trauma. Rasheed Al Roussan discovers there is far more to music than entertainment.

IN MAN'S long journey of survival, music has always been one of the realms where the human spirit dwells. In every forgotten culture there is an unbroken hymn, a song or a melody that once provoked joy, fear or tears. Music fills the soul with faith, determination and happiness. Warriors marched into battle to the beat of military drums; worshippers prayed with song and lovers wooed with the lute.

The power of music has always lifted the human spirit. Today, music is increasingly recognized as therapy.

The practice of music therapy requires a medium for communication and depends on direct interaction between the therapist, patient and the music. The late Muir Bashir, a famous oud guitarist, who died last year, says that music has a special soothing effect. It relaxes the mind and body.

Kefah Fakhuri, director of the National Music Conservatory, agrees. "Music therapy can be used to cure people suffering from different psychological or physical ailments." He explained that by using the elements of music such as rhythmic patterns, harmony, and melody, disabilities like autism can be detected and even cured.

He mentioned a particular case of a young girl that used to suffer from autism, a disorder that severely impairs the development of a person's ability to communicate, interact, and maintain normal contact with the outside world. Music therapy succeeded in curing the girl. The music therapist used to sit the girl on his back while he sat in front of the piano. With stretched out hands, the girl started in time to respond, and slowly interact with the piano player, slowly directing his hand movements on the keyboard.

It took seven long years of



Kefah Fakhuri

therapy, but it worked—the child gradually learned to communicate.

Handicapped people are a living example of the benefits of music therapy. Mr. Fakhuri explained that by playing certain rhythms on the drums in front of a handicapped patient, they can gradually learn to imitate the tutor's hands, which trains their muscles to become more flexible.

Mr. Fakhuri said that different types of music serve a particular purpose. People suffering from anxiety enjoy the powerful and lively beats of rock, while others relax by listening to classical music. Most importantly, he added, "People interested in music in our country are willing to accept this method as a way of curing others."

The musical director said

there are great possibilities for developing this type of healing. However, he pointed out that "training students would demand that specialists be brought in from abroad, which requires a great deal of money." Despite this, he believes it is important to make the public and social institutions in the Kingdom aware of the vitality of music therapy by holding an international conference in Jordan.

On an international level, music therapy centers are widely spread in across United States and Europe. One center that made news headlines recently, the Pavarotti Music Center in the southern Bosnian town of Mostar, is providing the children of the war-torn region with a way of alleviating the trauma they experienced as a result of the conflict.

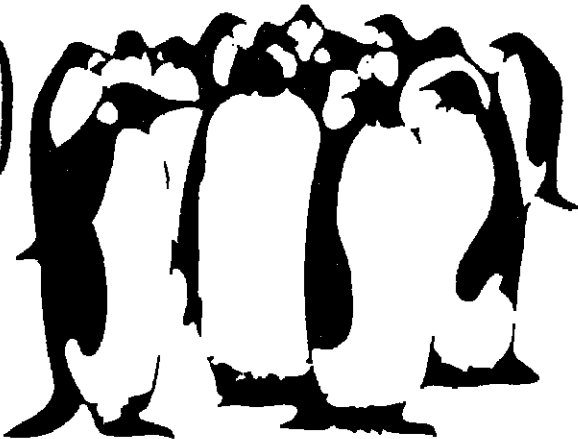
Physical injuries may linger, but spiritual damage may be cured with the help of different therapies—like music. Music is an art that transcends mere entertainment value. Music experts argue that introducing people to the soothing world of music, sound and artistic expression can greatly help the rehabilitation of many people who have suffered emotionally.

In a world of dilemmas music proves to be a revolutionary way of engaging individuals in their own growth by transferring their musical and non-musical skills into other aspects of their life. The quest to integrate art into our lives has become an essential part of our development. ■



Dental Technician Ron Grant paints custom artwork on patients' crowns for a fee of \$200 and up. He works out of his garage in Murrieta, Calif. Photo by Gina Ferazzi.

AROUND TOWN



'Screen giant' passes away

THE EGYPTIAN and Arab cinema lost one of the most famous screen giants in the Arab world. Fared Showki, dubbed as the king of the silver screen, died of a heart attack at the age of 74 on Monday. He started out in 1938 and appeared in more than 300 films. He became famous for his "devilish" roles. "Al Moaleem" was one of his most famous characters. He received many local and international awards, one of them being the State Prize in 1950, a shield from the late President Jamal Abd Al Naser. Before his death, he continued working right up till his death. Thousands of people attended his funeral on Tuesday.



THE FAR SIDE

By GARY LARSON



"So! Planning on roaming the neighborhood with some of your buddies today?"

Jerash: a feast of fun for everyone!

AMMAN (Star)—The 17th Jerash Festival for Art and Culture kicked off in style last week. Although the turnout was moderate at the beginning, it soon picked up during the week, with more and more visitors attending the annual festivities.

Visitors came from all over the kingdom to see different artists perform. In particular, there were many people from the Gulf countries.

It seems that people's tastes have become a lot more varied this year, compared to previous years. Before, singers and folk dancing topped the bill, but this year, more emphasis has been placed on satisfying the young.

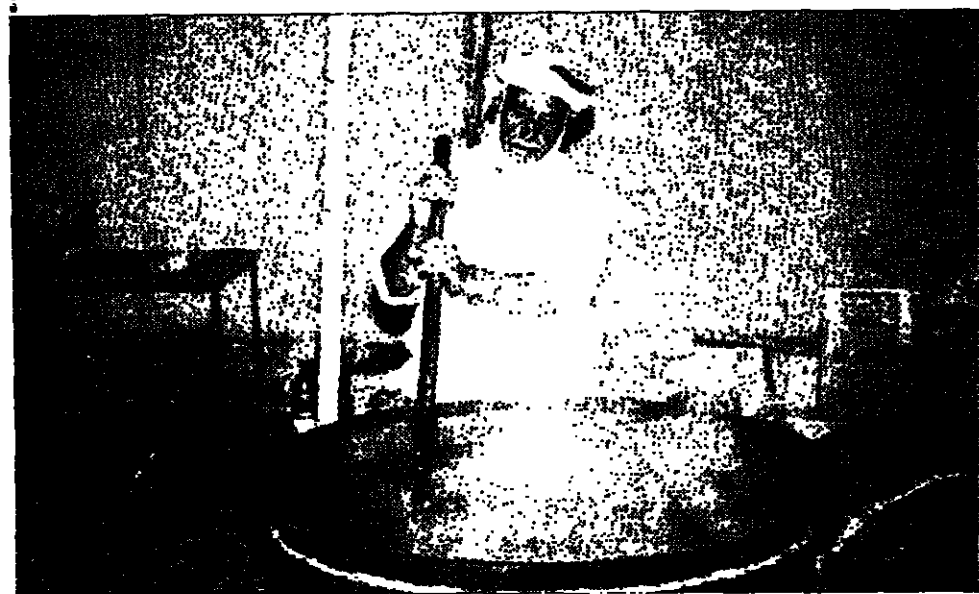
More and more families are attending plays for children. The four-day Cinderella play at the Light and Sound Theater proved to be a huge success. More fun activities are promised for this week including a children's extravaganza from the Far-East which is likely to be a real crowd puller.



One of the most exciting things about Jerash is its ability to gather popular folklore culture from so many different countries. Above: Born in Iraq, Ziyad Shama is an interesting phenomena. This week he delighted his audience by playing the oud, entralling them with a traditional brand of Arab music.



Najwah Karam kicked off the Jerash Festival with her three-night musical show. She enchanted the crowd with her songs, well known across the Arab world. Although she performed up to standard, moving the crowd with her famous songs like Saken, turnout was somewhat disappointing. Fewer people came to her opening concert than any opening night in previous years. Despite this, people, especially those from the Gulf countries, said they enjoyed themselves immensely. They also said that the seats at the South Theater were just right, with plenty of elbow room.



An Omani at the Jerash Festival stirs a big bowl as he makes traditional sweets. The Omani tent on the Columnade Street offers visitors a rich display of traditional Omani art and culture.

Marcel sings to the world

LEBANESE ARTIST Marcel Khaleefah, performs at the Jerash Festival.

His melodies make you feel closer to him. Well-known for performing national and patriotic songs, Khaleefah asked the audience to keep silent and feel as if they were in a temple or praying. The artist sings verses by famous political poets such as Mahmoud Darwish and Samir Qandil. His music is distinctive—it isn't about a particular experience or a specific person or even a country—he is a true internationalist who sings about the suffering and pain of people across the globe.



AGENDA

Exhibitions

■ Paintings by 18 artists from Egypt, Syria, Iraq, Palestine and Lebanon at the Al Mashriq gallery, Shimisani. Continues until 1 November.

The Jerash Festival

■ The Jerash Festival for Arts and Culture runs until 8 August.

Thursday 30 July:

Singer Elias Karam from Syria performing for two nights at the South Theater; The Prague Philharmonic Orchestra performs at the North Theater (two nights); The Jordanian University Troupe performs at Artemis (one night only); Tales of the Grimm Brothers performed by Teater Lalik from Poland will show at the South and Light Theater for two nights.

Friday 31 July:

Rouzan Troupe will perform at the Artemis Theater for one night only; Jad in Grandma Tales from Lebanon will be at the Sound and Light Theater for four nights.

Saturday 1 August:

The Good and the Bad, a play from Egypt, at the South Theater for four nights; The London City Ballet perform Sleeping Beauty at the North Theater for two nights. Al Abba'a Play from Iraq will be performed at the Artemis for three nights.

Monday 3 August: The National Music Conservatory will perform at the North Theater for one night only.

Tuesday 4 August: Al Jeel Troupe, at the South Theater for one night only; the Azzefi Troupe from Tunis perform at the North Theater for two nights; the Al Hanouni Troupe perform at the Artemis for one night only; the Shenzhen Children's Art Ensemble from China perform at the Sound and Light Theater for four nights.

Wednesday 29 July: Taksim Al Anbar, a play from Jordan will be performed at the Artemis Theater for three nights.

In the Forum, local, Arab and international troupes will be performing throughout the week.

Al Hawas Exhibition

'Plastic art movement' lures us back to nature

By Lubna Khader
Star Staff Writer

PAINTINGS OF the Al Aqsa mosque and the Holy Sepulchre of old Jerusalem are just two out of 50 pieces on display at the Al Hawas exhibition currently being held at the Orfali Art Gallery.

The exhibition is about pioneering artwork for the young and the old. Nine Jordanian artists participated in the event showing the best of their collections—Rafiq Al Lahham, Diana Shm'onki, Samia Al Zaro, Abdel Raouf Shmoon, Hussein Al Adasa, Mohammed Al Ameri, Nader Samara, Vian Shmanki, and Ahmed Sheh.

The exhibition can be considered an experiment because it focuses on the value of "plastic art" and its relation to human creativity. Indeed, the rich display is a novel attempt by these Jordanian artists to draw the enthusiasm of the public by appealing to their inner consciousness.

The paintings provide a very vivid connection between mother earth and the development of humanity, between art and the notion of self, and between the soil and body. The artists have sought to



translate these concepts and their aesthetic appeal to the locality. At the entrance, for instance, an oil painting by Rafiq Al Lahham depicts life in Jordan and Palestine.

This is different from the works of Samia Al Zaro who presents a varied collection of welding and iron sculpture.

Abdel Raouf Shmoon, on the other hand, has a soothing touch, and his paintings form a bridge between history and culture. This is also true of Hussein Daseh's work. A painter for the last 20 years, he had sought to represent the relationship between man and the land. Daseh, also a writer, says that writing his four books about art and cinema has also helped him to conjure visual images which he has used in his paintings.

Diana Shm'onki and Vian Shmanki more or less have the same style, distinguished by the use of natural colors. The onlooker can clearly discern the influence of western art. A sense of nature can also be found in the works of artists Nader Abu Samarah and Ahmed Asbeh.

This kind of exhibition hopes to spread awareness of the so-called "plastic art movement" in Jordan and, hopefully, all over the world. You'll need to hurry to catch this exciting exhibition, however, as it closes at the end of the month.



Rocking Horse Cafe
Dinner and drinks
Second year

Le Jourdain

Supplément en français du Star



Ghassul : aux sources de tous les progrès par Véronique Abu-Nijmeh

Si, pour se rendre à la mer Morte, les automobilistes qui s'élancent aujourd'hui dans la Vallée du Jourdain, avaient emprunté cet itinéraire il y a 5500 ans, ils n'auraient pu ignorer le village de Ghassul. Agglomération qui paraît modeste de nos jours, Ghassul était le centre d'une civilisation qui s'est répandue dans le Ghor entre 3500 et 3200 avant J. C. c'est-à-dire entre l'âge de la pierre et l'âge du bronze quand se forment les premières villes, et qui, à maints égards, marque l'évolution de l'humanité proche-orientale. On n'aurait donc vu nos voyageurs d'aujourd'hui ? D'abord une contrée nettement plus verdoyante : les monts de Moab étaient boisés de chênes, la plaine marécageuse. A l'approche du cours actuel du Jourdain, presque en face de Jéricho, une agglomération dense de petites bâtisses rectangulaires de briques crues, dépourvues de fornications. Aux alentours, des cultures de céréales, de pois, de lentilles, de dattes et des jachères où paissaient vaches, chèvres et moutons. Car désormais, le pastoralisme et l'agriculture relèguent la chasse au rôle d'appoint.

On conserve la nourriture dans d'énormes jarres (1 m de diamètre, 1,5 m de haut). Les innovations techniques fleurissent : pour la première fois, on emploie le tour, pour la première fois, le for et arc vient à bout des pierres les plus dures. On acquiert la maîtrise de la petite métallurgie. Les sépultures ne sont plus incluses dans la sphère d'habitation : des cimetières voient le jour à l'extérieur des agglomérations. A Ghassul même, les intérieurs des maisons sont soigneusement peints. On décore les parois de motifs aux couleurs variées, dessins géométriques ou personnages masqués. Si les pratiques religieuses de ces hommes restent ignorées, la mascarade processionnelle figurée ci-contre suggère un stade déjà avancé de la pensée religieuse. Le village de Ghassul a été habité sans interruption pendant 300 ans. Cette stabilité explique en partie l'éclosion de tant de progrès.

Éclaboussures

Chasse aux sorcières

La semaine dernière, un séminaire organisé conjointement par le Centre de recherche Al-Urdun Al-Jadid (CRUJ) et la fondation allemande Konrad Adenauer Stiftung (KAS) a été consacré à la demande du Conseil des présidents des syndicats professionnels. Son président, Hassan Jahar, également à la tête du syndicat des ingénieurs agronomes, s'est exprimé : « Suite à certaines informations qui nous sont parvenues et qui font état de relations entre le KAS et les Israéliens, nous avons pris cette décision », avant d'ajouter : « Notre but maintenant est de vérifier ces informations ». Le CPSP a effectivement invité Hani Hourani, le directeur général du CRUJ à rejoindre une réunion ultérieure avec les présidents des syndicats afin de mettre les choses au clair.

En 1994 le Centre avait été également attaqué pour l'organisation d'un atelier sur « Le parti politique » en collaboration déjà avec le KAS. « Mais cette campagne calomnieuse s'est soldée par un échec cuisant », rappelle Hani Hourani, puisque les représentants de 17 partis politiques ont participé aux travaux de l'atelier. Notons que le CRUJ et le KAS ont mis en place entre 1995 et 1998 une conférence économique internationale, cinq séminaires sur des thèmes démocratiques et une visite aux parlements allemand et européen avec une délégation de parlementaires, d'académiciens et de chercheurs jordaniens. Trois années de liens étroits sans provoquer de réactions hostiles.

Comment alors expliquer la soudaine méfiance à l'égard d'un séminaire, intitulé « Le rôle des syndicats professionnels dans le processus démocratique et la vie publique », et auxquels devaient prendre part des dirigeants syndicalistes et politiques de toutes tendances (notamment les présidents des syndicats des ingénieurs et des médecins, les deux plus importants, et le secrétaire général du Front d'Action Islamique) ?

Il est vrai que les temps ne sont guère favorables aux relations entre des centres de recherche jordaniens et des ONG étrangères. Ainsi l'article 36 du projet de loi sur la presse et les publications, actuellement en discussion au Parlement, stipule l'interdiction pour les centres de recevoir une quelconque aide ou financement d'un organisme non-jordanien.

Par ailleurs, selon Hani Hourani, des activistes n'auraient pas hésité à raviver la fibre nationale de la Centrale syndicale contre la normalisation avec Israël. Le séminaire a donc été reporté. La campagne de diffamation a bien fonctionné, levant un vent de suspicion sans fondement à l'égard des activités des centres de recherche.

Hussein Abu-Rumman

Le Jourdain sur le net
<http://star.arabia.com>
Le Jourdain sur le net
<http://star.arabia.com>

XVIIème Festival de Jérash

Programme du 30 juillet au 5 août

Tous les spectacles des principaux théâtres commencent à 20h30

Théâtre Sud

30, 31 juillet : Elias Karam, chanteur syrien
1er, 2, 3 août : Théâtre. «Le bon et le méchant» par une troupe égyptienne
4 : Al-Jeel, folklore caucasien

Théâtre Nord

30, 31 juillet : Orchestre philharmonique de Prague
1er, 2 août : La belle au bois dormant par le Ballet de Londres
3 : Le conservatoire national de Jordanie
4, 5 : La troupe tunisienne Azifat

Théâtre Artémis

30 juillet : Troupe de l'Université de Jordanie
31 juillet : La troupe jordanienne Rozana
1er, 2, 3 août : Théâtre. «Al-Aba'a» par une troupe irakienne
4 : La troupe jordanienne Hannouneh
5 : Théâtre. «Tkaseem Al-Anbar» par une troupe jordanienne

Théâtre Son et Lumière

30 juillet : Contes des Frères Grimm lus par le Polonais Teatr Lalik
31 juillet, 1er, 2, 3 août : Contes «Jad in Grandma»
4, 5 : Ensemble artistique de Chine, Les enfants de Shenzhen

Sans oublier les jeunes talents qui se produiront à Garasa (à partir de 20h), les activités traditionnelles du Forum (à partir de 18h30) et les diverses expositions.

Départs d'Amman pour Jérash à 16h30 et 18h30 à la station de bus Abdali ou au McDonald's de la rue Goshah.

Pour tout renseignement, tél. : 5675199.
Un site internet : www.JerashFestival.com.jo

Chanson arabe : une sirène à deux têtes

Diana Haddad et Marcel Khalifeh ont enchanté le Théâtre Sud de Jérash pendant cette première semaine du festival. Deux étoiles du firmament de la chanson arabe mais aux éclats distincts. Entre Diana, la «vendeuse» d'amour et Marcel, l'engagé poète, un seul point commun : leur popularité.

Les notes de son oud montent dans le ciel de Jérash. Les yeux fixés sur les étoiles, Marcel Khalifeh semble attendre une inspiration divine. Puis les paroles viennent dans une voix puissante, claire et grave. Une voix poétique comme un torrent de montagne. Dans le Théâtre Sud, le silence est total. Les spectateurs ne reprennent pas les paroles du chanteur qu'ils connaissent pourtant par cœur. Ils ne dansent pas non plus comme pour le show de Diana Haddad. Marcel Khalifeh, avant le début de son récital, leur a demandé d'observer un certain recueillement : «Il faut imaginer qu'on est dans un temple pour mieux saisir les sentiments d'espoir, de joie et de tristesse». Souhait respecté pendant plus de cinq heures d'envolement ! Le public était littéralement en communion avec un officiant, barbe poivre et sel et cheveux bruns, aux fausses allures d'intellectuel soixante-huitard.

Avec l'homme mais surtout avec ses textes. Car c'est autour de mots que Marcel Khalifeh a construit sa carrière commencée en 1972. Après diverses expériences musicales dans le folklore ou pour des

films documentaires historiques, ce Libanais de 48 ans trouve sa voie pendant la guerre civile qui ravage son pays : «J'étais alors en retraite de la vie publique et j'ai commencé à m'intéresser aux poèmes de Mahmoud Darwish (un poète palestinien. NDLR)».

«Chanteur engagé», ainsi se définit Marcel Khalifeh avant d'ajouter : «Je n'ai aucune ambition politique, je crois simplement à la responsabilité de chacun». Depuis plus de vingt ans, il a donc fait de la chanson, ce dernier espace de liberté quand tous les droits sont confisqués, son arme de combat.

Maquillage impeccable, coupe élégante, bouche immense mais belle. Les armes de Diana Haddad sont d'une autre galaxie. Sur la scène du Théâtre Sud, plus sexy que jamais, elle a su, trois soirs d'affilée, jouer les mannequins pour un public particulièrement excité. Entre deux avions et trois albums bourrés de succès à l'eau de rose,

Diana révèle qu'adolescente, elle «avait tendance à se vouloir se maquiller et s'habiller comme les grandes dames» et qu'elle «fatiguait beaucoup sa famille». Proposée vers la gloire aux

chaînes satellites qui ont largement propagé l'effet «Haddad», la Libanaise d'à peine 30 ans poursuit son ascension et pourrait bientôt faire ses débuts au cinéma.

Accusée récemment de ne pas soutenir la cause palestinienne pour ne pas avoir participé au festival de Jéricho en juin, elle rétorque «jalousie» et se dit prête à chanter en Palestine. «Je ne suis pas une chanteuse engagée, reconnaît-elle, lucide, mais j'ai quand même envie de parler de la souffrance quotidienne, de la guerre et surtout du racisme». Un programme ambitieux que les sirènes du succès facile rendent bien improbable.

Pour Marcel Khalifeh, entre la chanson d'amour et la chanson politique, il faut de toute façon choisir. «Si l'amour existe dans mes chansons, précise-t-il, c'est l'amour de la patrie et du peuple palestinien torturé par l'occupant». Le poète veut croire à l'avenir du genre qu'il défend. Le public n'était pas un peu plus nombreux pour écouter ses plaintes, que pour entendre les mièvreries de Diana ?

Youssef Abu Saleh



«L'essentiel, c'est de faire connaître les souffrances des gens», Marcel Khalifeh.

Entretien

Une caméra palestinienne chez les juifs

Azza El-Hassan est une jeune réalisatrice de 27 ans. Elle assure actuellement la promotion de son documentaire Koushan Mousa. Un film instructif sur une colonie juive et ses effets en pleins territoires occupés. «Un avertissement», prévient-elle.

La jeune réalisatrice palestinienne Azza El-Hassan a rencontré pendant un mois et demi des Israéliens et des Palestiniens qui lui ont parlé de la colonie juive de Ma'ale Adomim. Le gouvernement israélien envisage son extension prochaine. Dans son documentaire Koushan Mousa, Azza et sa caméra numérique dévoilent l'illégitimité et les conséquences sur la vie des villages alentour de la colonie. Avant l'Allemagne et peut-être la France et après deux projections à Ramallah et à Hébron, Azza El-Hassan vient de montrer Koushan Mousa à Darat Al Funun à Amman. Impressions de tournage avec une réalisatrice enthousiaste.

Le Jourdain : Que raconte votre documentaire ?
Azza El-Hassan : Le film raconte mon voyage personnel dans les territoires occupés de 1967, qui incluent la colonie de Ma'ale Adomim ou colline rouge. Les Palestiniens l'ont en fait surnommée Ma'ale Adomim, c'est-à-dire la colline des maîtres. Le projet d'expansion (sur cinq villages palestiniens et un territoire bedouin. NDLR) de cette colonie a été très médiatisé. L'avenue de Jérusalem-Est où elle se situe doit être déterminée seulement au cours des discussions sur le statut final de la Ville sainte. Or, les Israéliens visent à donner à Jérusalem-Est un voisinage juif et à plus long terme éventuellement la disparition de cette partie arabe.

Le Jourdain : D'où vous est venue l'idée ?

A. H. : Les gens des villages qui entourent Ma'ale Adomim ont protesté contre l'expansion de la colonie auprès des tribunaux israéliens. Nous avons pensé que nous pouvions les soutenir avec un documentaire. Ensuite, nous avons commencé nos recherches et nous avons réalisé que ce problème concerne l'ensemble des colonies en général, construites sur les territoires occupés depuis 1967.

Le Jourdain : Avez-vous suivi le plan que vous vous étiez fixé avant le tournage ?

A. H. : Pour faire ce documentaire, j'étais seule. J'ai effectué deux types de recherches. D'abord la recherche de preuves puis une recherche purement visuelle. Ensuite j'ai suivi mon flair comme disent les journalistes et j'ai passé beaucoup de temps avec les gens que j'ai rencontrés. Quand



«Les Israéliens ont l'habitude de voir des Palestiniens mais pas des Palestiniens qui leur parlent d'égal à égal», Azza El-Hassan, réalisatrice de Koushan Mousa.

j'ai commencé le film, je ne concevais l'arrivée des juifs qu'en termes d'implantations. Mais pendant le tournage j'ai réalisé qu'il s'agissait plutôt de «colonies». Vous voyez les choses différemment quand vous êtes plus proche des choses. De voir les conséquences sur les villages et les gens, j'ai compris qu'il ne s'agissait pas seulement d'implantations. Alors oui, j'ai changé radicalement de direction. Réaliser un documentaire vous réserve toujours beaucoup de surprises. Vous commencez un manuscrit et vous terminez avec un autre. C'est exactement ce qui est arrivé avec Koushan Mousa : j'avais dans la tête un film totalement différent de ce que j'ai obtenu à la fin.

Le Jourdain : Les plans d'expansion d'Israël sont vraiment évoqués depuis peu de temps. Pensez-vous que votre film puisse contribuer à ouvrir les yeux sur ce problème ?

A. H. : Je pense que mon documentaire peut apporter quelque chose. Par exemple, pour l'expansion de la colonie de Jabal Abu-Ghneim, les Palestiniens n'ont rien fait jusqu'au moment où les bulldozers sont entrés en action. Concernant Ma'ale Adomim, le travail n'a pas encore commencé et c'est pour cela que l'on utilise des cartes dans le film pour permettre aux spectateurs d'envisager ce qui peut se passer dans l'avenir : une ville de la taille de Tel Aviv va

être mise sur pied. Il n'est pas trop tard pour réagir. Mon film est un avertissement. Les cinq villages qui entourent Ma'ale Adomim existent encore jusqu'à l'extension de la colonie.

Le Jourdain : Quelles seront les conséquences pour les populations, selon vous ?

A. H. : Dans le documentaire, on voit les effets qu'une telle colonie peut avoir sur les Palestiniens avec l'exemple du village de Ain Karem. C'était un village palestinien mais avec l'occupation, il a perdu son identité. A travers cela, j'essaie de montrer ce que pourrait être le sort des cinq villages autour de Ma'ale Adomim. La Nakba continue. Ain Karem, c'était la Nakba de 1948. La Nakba d'aujourd'hui, ce sont ces cinq villages et beaucoup d'autres.

Le Jourdain : Pensez-vous que la population palestinienne des territoires occupés soit consciente du danger que représentent ces colonies ?

A. H. : Oui, mais ils ne peuvent pas faire grand-chose parce que pour l'instant, la politique est occupée par les seuls dirigeants. Les gens des territoires comprennent très bien parce que ce sont des ouvriers palestiniens qui ont construit les

maisons des colonies, des Palestiniens y travaillent et parfois y font leurs courses. En revanche, je ne pense pas que les Palestiniens de la diaspora soient conscients de la situation car ils imaginent les colonies comme de simples implantations, des maisons dispersées ici et là, pas comme de véritables villes.

Le Jourdain : Dans votre film, vous parlez avec plusieurs juifs israéliens. Ces rencontres ont-elles été difficiles à obtenir ?

A. H. : J'imagine qu'en étant un homme, je n'aurais pas pu faire le film car les Israéliens sont racistes, avec des stéréotypes dans la tête. Ils n'imaginent pas qu'une femme puisse commettre ce qu'ils appellent des actes terroristes et puis même si je ressemble beaucoup

à une Palestinienne, je ne correspondrais pas à leurs clichés de la Palestine traditionnelle. Cela n'a beaucoup aidé parce que j'ai pu me rendre dans les colonies et parler avec des colons. Les Israéliens ont l'habitude de voir des Palestiniens mais pas des Palestiniens qui leur parlent d'égal à égal. Malheureusement les Israéliens

sont convaincus d'avoir raison. Ils ne croient pas que ce qu'ils sont en train de dire est révoltant. Les colons avec lesquels j'ai parlé savaient que j'étais Palestinienne mais ils restaient persuadés de dire la vérité et je devais l'accepter.

Le Jourdain : Qu'est-ce qui a été le plus dur pendant le tournage ?

A. H. : En tant que Palestinienne de la diaspora, je n'avais pas l'habitude de parler avec des Israéliens. Ce film était vraiment mon premier contact avec eux et c'est un peu intimidant. Les Palestiniens de Palestine savent mieux se comporter que nous face aux Israéliens. J'ai essayé d'agir d'une façon professionnelle en tentant d'oublier mes origines pour être objective. Mais après chaque journée de tournage, j'avoue que j'étais très tendue.

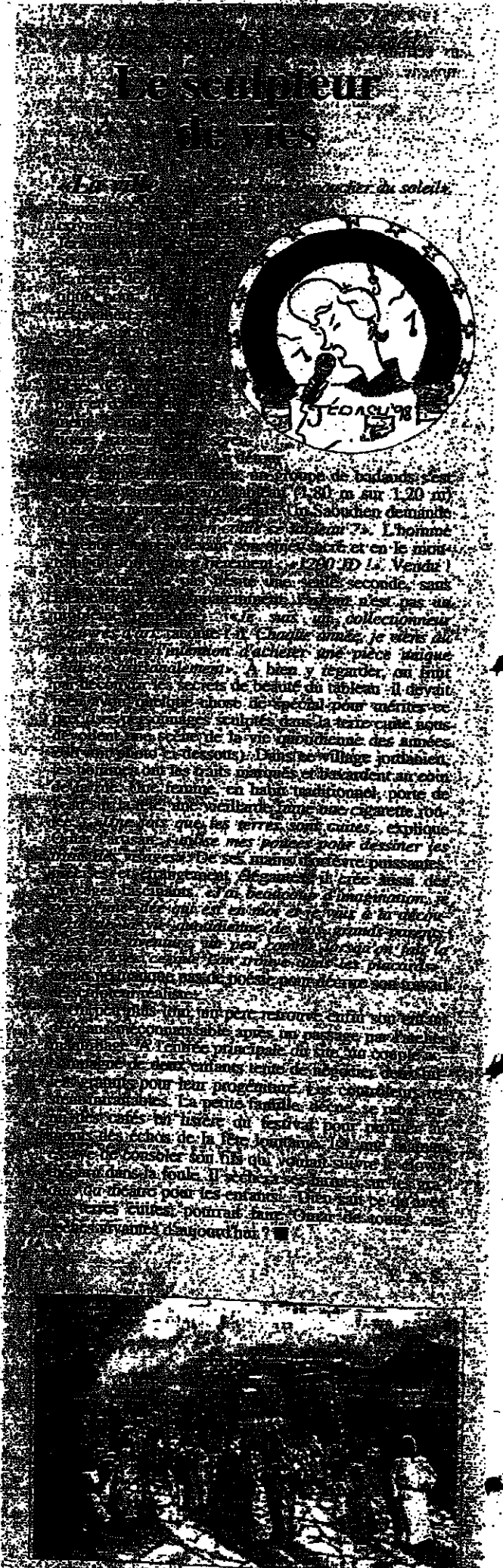
Le Jourdain : Pourquoi ce titre Koushan Mousa ?

A. H. : Pendant le tournage, j'ai rencontré un homme dont la terre avait été saisie en 1967 par les Israéliens pour construire Ma'ale Adomim. Ce monsieur à l'époque avait des titres de propriété (Koushan en arabe) des Anglais et des Turcs, selon lesquels cette terre lui appartenait, à lui et à sa famille. Il est allé réclamer sa terre aux Israéliens et les soldats lui ont répondu : «C'est possible que vous ayez des titres des Anglais et des Turcs mais les nôtres viennent de Moïse». D'où le titre : Koushan Mousa.

Le Jourdain : Vous avez projeté votre film en Palestine et en Jordanie. Les réactions ont-elles été différentes dans les deux pays ?

A. H. : Bien sûr, j'ai remarqué par exemple que les spectateurs de Palestine ont beaucoup rigolé sur certains passages alors que les gens qui ont vu mon film en Jordanie ont pris les choses d'une manière très sérieuse. Les Jordaniens ont toujours une idée romantique de la Palestine et ils ont du mal à avaler le fait que les Palestiniens sont en train d'être transformés en Peaux-Rouges ou en Sud-Africains noirs victimes de l'apartheid. En Palestine par contre, les gens vivent la dure réalité chaque jour et ils acceptent les choses comme elles sont.

Propos recueillis par Samia Abu Sharar



Le mot de la semaine «CALAMITE»

Al chène, le roseau dit-il, «Je pile et ne romps pas». Faut-il le dire par la Fontaine mais non, par l'étymologie, puisque ce sont bien des roseaux rompus qui sont à l'origine du mot. Calamité désigne en fait la tige de roseau ou plus généralement de blé, d'avoine, le roseau ou tout objet fait de roseau (fil, paille...). Mais en latin, le mot est devenu, il a donné lieu aux dérivés les plus divers : calamitas, devenu dans le français du XIV^e siècle calamité, désigne tout fléau qui endommage la moisson sur pied pour ne laisser que les tiges des pailles. On trouve également le roseau latin dans le mot «calamiteux» et le «calamité», par l'intermédiaire de la forme abrégée «calam». C'est de

même «calamite» qui est issu de l'arabe qalam, le crayon. Et la calamité est une pierre aimantée que l'on place sur une tige de roseau pour la faire fléchir en guise de boussole. Jusqu'au calamar ou calmar (les deux sont possibles), mollusque marin possédant une poche d'encre et dont la coquille se termine en une pointe appelée... plume.

Une grande famille qui exclut le roseau lui-même : l'élegante plante à ses racines du germanique rans (cf. allemand moderne Rahn) et apparaît au XI^e siècle en français sous la jolie variante roseil.

Véronique Abo-Nijmeh



Le roseau, plante vivace mais pas une calamité.

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Société Les filles comptent vraiment pour des prunes

Y a-t-il plus beau cadeau que la naissance d'un enfant ? Oui, que cela soit un garçon. Dans les sociétés arabes, l'enfant mâle est roi pour les pères comme pour les mères. Et dans tout ça, la mythologie n'arrange rien. Dossier complet sur ces bébés en rose qui ombragent notre ciel bleu.

La femme dans la tradition populaire de B à V

Bâton : Au seuil de leur maison, le mari donne un coup de bâton sur la tête de la mariée pour signifier que l'homme sera le maître de la maison.

Cheveux : Ils sont le centre des sentiments et de l'esprit. Ils cachent des pouvoirs magiques et mystérieux. Couper les cheveux d'une femme, c'est en quelque sorte une mort symbolique. Et d'ailleurs les femmes arabes préfèrent avoir les cheveux longs.

Dot : Le mari remet une dot à la famille de sa femme pour compenser la perte de cette force productive ou bien par crainte des pouvoirs mystérieux de la femme.

Jatte : Comme le puits, elle est un symbole de vie et de fertilité. Dans le même registre, le mari subtilise un récipient creux (qui représente la femme) chez sa belle-famille, avant les noces. C'est une pratique qui existe encore dans certains villages de campagne.

Tribu : Le couple doit rendre visite à la tribu de la femme, avant de s'installer définitivement dans leur maison. Le mari est censé ressentir de la culpabilité parce qu'il prive la tribu d'un de ces éléments créatifs et fertiles.

Virginité : Elle est le fruit sacré de toutes choses et transmet des pouvoirs magiques au mari.

T. S.

L'enfant du sable. Son père aurait voulu un garçon mais il a eu une fille. C'est la nature qui obéit à la volonté du père. On la nomme Ahmed, elle règne en maître sur ses sept sœurs et jouit de toutes les prérogatives d'un garçon : elle prendra une épouse !

Tadris ben Jaloun, l'auteur de ce roman, a poussé très loin son imagination mais pour mettre le doigt sur un phénomène social.

Garçon ou fille ? Facile à deviner. Une mine d'entêtement, les yeux exorbités de la mère au encore de la belle-mère, un regard lointain qui cherche la consolation, un sourire désenchanté : le nouveau-né est une fille. Autre indice, les bonbons offerts : ils sont de bonne qualité, c'est un garçon ; ils ne ressemblent à rien.

Selon Salah El-Louzi, docteur en sociologie à l'Université de Jordanie, ce désir fébrile d'avoir un garçon est responsable de l'augmentation des membres de la famille en Jordanie. «Avoir des filles, c'est comme n'avoir personne. Une femme continue à enfanter jusqu'à ce qu'elle ait un garçon». C'est le cas de Zeinab, une mère de neuf filles, qui vient d'avoir un garçon : «Chaque fois, je me disais «c'est un garçon», je me suis trompée neuf fois» et elle souhaite ne pas se tromper la prochaine fois : «Ma belle-mère dit que le petit doit avoir un

Le fils aîné trop aimé

Dans son ouvrage La structure patriarcale dans la société arabe, le célèbre sociologue jordanien Hisham Sharabi propose une vision atypique du régime de faveur accordé au garçon : «Ce style d'éducation donne beaucoup de liberté à la fille arabe dans la construction de sa personnalité, affirme-t-il. Elle est plus libre, plus débrouillarde que le garçon parce qu'elle a grandi loin des projecteurs tournés vers son frère».

La pression, en fait, est sur le fils aîné qui représente «l'âme de sa mère», «son cœur», la preuve de sa réussite en tant que femme et la garantie de son avenir.

L'aîné est le centre d'attention de la famille. Le père le noie de conseils car il le veut le meilleur possible. Il remplacera son père un jour. Il doit donc être un homme dès son plus jeune âge. Accablé, étouffé par tant de responsabilités qui nuisent à sa personnalité, «l'aîné pense que son père le déteste» et peut devenir cruel. Cette logique correspondrait à une conviction mythique et ancienne, fondée sur le fruit précoce, que l'on préfère à tous les autres.

T. S.

frère pour qu'ils jouent ensemble.

Même le gynécologue peut se tromper : «Le médecin m'a dit que j'avais un garçon mais ce fut une fille. Quelle catastrophe !», confie Zabra, mon mari refuse de payer l'hôpital. Ma belle-mère me boude car elle pense que j'ai menti pour me faire dorloter pendant neuf mois».

Cet accueil froid de la naissance d'une fille est connu depuis des siècles dans les sociétés fondées sur le patriarcat.

c'est-à-dire sur la puissance paternelle et la suprématie des hommes sur les femmes. C'était le cas des sociétés arabes, «avant l'islam et jusque dans les années 1960», précise le sociologue. Le désert immense de l'Océan atlantique jusqu'aux pays du Golfe y tenait une place importante et soutenait le système. Au cœur de ce milieu hostile, l'homme représente le pilier du foyer, le pouvoir productif et le défenseur acharné de la tribu.

Ensuite le garçon est identifié à son père, il tire sa légitimité de son géniteur et porte le nom de la famille. «Dans la Jordanie du sud (Karak, Jordanie), le garçon portera le nom de son grand-père ou de la fille, celui de sa grand-mère ou de sa tante», précise Salah Al-Louzi. Après la naissance du premier garçon, le père perd son prénom pour devenir seulement «Abu plus le prénom de son fils aîné». En analysant le mot père en arabe, on y découvre aussi d'autres croyances mythiques car cela signifie le pâtre, l'herbe verte et la fertilité. Le père est ainsi la vie dans sa continuation et son renouvellement.

Fondamentale pour

l'homme, la naissance d'un fils est également primordiale pour les femmes. «L'individu tend à apprécier les choses que la société apprécie et les valeurs de la société deviennent alors ses propres valeurs», affirme Yasmine Hadad, docteur en psychologie de l'Université de Jordanie, pour essayer d'expliquer l'attitude conciliante des femmes. Car effectivement, elles sont parmi les plus déterminées à avoir des garçons. C'est un moyen pour elles de garder le mari à la maison. L'enfant mâle est une garantie, l'assurance de sa valeur et la réaffirmation de son rôle de femme. «La mère s'inquiète de l'avenir conjugal de sa fille jusqu'à ce qu'elle ait un garçon», acquiesce Salah El-Louzi. Pas de garçon et l'homme risque de chercher une autre femme ou de répudier son épouse.

Aux sources de cette société pro-masculine, les mythes et le mystère. La femme est depuis toujours redoutée à cause de ses forces magiques (voir encadré sur Ishtar). «Ces représentations anciennes héritées des mythes jouent un rôle très important dans la discrimination entre la fille et le garçon, la femme et l'homme, à l'intérieur d'une société patriarcale et modernisée comme la société jordanienne», confirme le sociologue. Les représentations de la femme dans l'imaginaire populaire, les traditions et les coutumes avant les années 1960 soulignent cette réalité.

Aujourd'hui, quel est-il ? La domination du père n'est plus aussi évidente même si son rôle reste essentiel. En raison de l'influence occidentale, les liens familiaux et sociaux sont plus faibles qu'avant, surtout parmi les plus pauvres qui habitent la ville et les classes moyennes. Cela signifie que la distribution des rôles est en train de changer. Désormais, l'homme et la femme accomplissent les mêmes tâches à l'extérieur de la maison.

Malgré tout, la femme arabe continue de préférer ses fils à ses filles qui sont «un souci jus-

qu'à la mort», résume une mère de famille aux allures modernes. Faut-il aller chercher chez Freud la réponse à ce penchant «naturel» pour le garçon ? Selon le psychanalyste, la femme refuse sa féminité et trouve dans ses enfants mâles une compensation. Ou bien son attitude est la manifestation de ce qu'elle a hérité de sa mère et de sa grand-mère : en détestant sa fille, elle déteste ses propres faiblesses.

Cette discrimination se ressent jusque dans l'éducation des enfants. À l'âge de sept ans, le garçon et la fille n'ont pas les mêmes libertés. Le père emmènera son fils dans les fêtes collectives, la fille aidera sa mère dans les travaux domestiques ; elle jouera uniquement dans la cour de la maison, son frère pourra traîner dans les rues. La distinction se révèle bien entendu aussi dans le choix des futurs métiers : «Tu feras une excellente institutrice, ma fille» mais «tu feras un excellent médecin, mon fils».

Tadris Salah



«Avoir des filles, c'est comme n'avoir personne. Une femme continue à enfanter jusqu'à ce qu'elle ait un garçon», affirme un sociologue.

Ishtar, déesse de la vie et de la mort

De 30.000 à 10.000 avant J. C., elle règne sur toutes les régions du Moyen-Orient. Ishtar est la déesse adorée. Les sculptures la représentent souvent seule ou parfois avec un dieu qui est à la fois son fils et son mari. Ses symbolisations mythiques sont multiples. Incarnation de la déesse-mère, elle est la lune qui descend sur les ténébres. Par les changements de son corps, la femme est en effet toujours nouvelle comme la lune dans son mouvement circulaire. L'homme, au contraire, est représenté par le soleil dans sa normalité et sa stabilité. Ishtar est aussi le serpent immortel qui change de peau et reconstruit une autre vie. On pensait que son corps était couvert d'écaillures (en arabe, serpent et vie ont la même racine). Ishtar la vierge qui donne pourtant la vie, Ishtar la mystérieuse, déesse de la sagesse à l'origine du monde, Ishtar la folle qui connaît les vérités cachées du royaume de l'intuition, Ishtar la sorcière qui transmet sa magie aux femmes et dont les rêves sont des révélations. Mais

surtout Ishtar, maîtresse de la vie et de la mort. Elle descend dans les enfers pendant l'hiver à la recherche de son fils Tamouz (le septième mois de l'année en arabe). Son absence provoque la mort de la nature qui repart à son retour. Ishtar a libéré son fils de la mort et sème le blé, symbole du renouvellement. Mais Tamouz se retrouvera bientôt dans les enfers. C'est le début d'un nouveau cycle de la vie.

Le mythe d'Ishtar donne la preuve de l'existence d'une société matriarcale, beaucoup plus ancienne que celle appuyée sur le pouvoir du père. La femme est ici dominante et ses enfants portent le nom de la mère.

Les sociétés arabes ont toutes été marquées par la mythologie de la déesse Ishtar mais elles n'ont gardé que sa face mystérieuse, magique et effrayante, faisant des femmes des êtres dont il faut se méfier.

T. S.

Années-lycée : le temps de l'insouciance

Le péril jeune, un film français de Cécile Klapish (1994).
En prêt au Centre culturel français.

Le péril jeune, c'est le passage de cinq adolescents à l'âge adulte. Une étape intermédiaire difficile et risquée (une référence au titre ?) dépeinte avec beaucoup de justesse. Cette comédie dramatique commence dans les murs paisibles d'un hôpital. Bruno, Momo, Alain et Léon sont venus accompagner leur copine qui doit bientôt accoucher. Le papa, Tomasi, qui est leur meilleur ami, est mort d'une overdose une semaine plus tôt. Les quatre compères sont donc là, réunis par le machisme desin, dans cette salle d'attente, tous alignés face à la caméra, face à leur passé et leurs souvenirs communs du baccalauréat.



Léon, Momo, Tomasi, Bruno et Alain passent le bac mais ils ont surtout décidé de ne pas se prendre la tête.

plaisirs futilité de la drogue. Il entraîne ses copains pour qui cette expérience nouvelle en vaut une autre. Mais tout s'arrête après le premier joint «foireux». En revanche, Tomasi poursuit sa descente aux enfers et s'éloigne inexorablement de ses vrais amis. Discrettement, le péril jeune s'ouvre sur un phénomène qui touche presque toutes les sociétés actuelles. On y voit l'adolescence dans toute sa force et sa fougue, ces années-lycée que chacun de nous a en mémoire, qui peut à la fois s'avérer fantastique et marquer la vie de manière catastrophique. Sans morale, le film de Klapish ne laisse pas de faire réfléchir sur le sens de l'humanité, qui, ici, si forte paraît-elle, ne parvient pas à détourner Tomasi de son chemin, son péril, sans retour.

Amineh Ishtay

Pour les générations futures

Les profs à l'école des droits de l'homme

Avoir les mêmes droits que son voisin, être libre de s'exprimer. Des évidences souvent battues en brèche par des régimes autoritaires. Pour combattre le mal à la racine, l'organisation jordanienne des droits de l'homme propose aux enseignants de faire passer un message de tolérance dans leurs classes.

Les organisations et les militants des droits de l'homme sont de plus en plus inquiets en raison de l'aggravation massive des violations des droits de l'homme à travers le monde. Après l'effondrement des régimes communistes à la fin des années 80, qualifiés d'anti-démocratiques ou de dictatures, on s'attendait à une amélioration sensible de la situation des droits humains. En réalité, à lire les rapports des différentes organisations non-gouvernementales et ceux des agences de l'Onu, on constate que le tableau est de plus en plus sombre. Occupations militaires, guerres civiles alternent avec les emprisonnements, les exécutions sommaires et les tortures.

À partir de là, que faire pour réduire les violations des droits collectifs et individuels de l'homme ? Cette question est depuis longtemps discutée par des organisations, des militants ou des intellectuels. Et on constate que la publication des rapports, les travaux des commissions d'enquête ont peu d'influence sur les gouvernements qui n'hésitent pas à recommencer leurs méfaits quelques temps après avoir été dénoncés. Au lieu de dépenser tant d'énergie, souvent vaine, l'idée de procéder à l'éducation des nouvelles générations a progressivement fait son chemin. En mars 1993, finalement, un programme d'action a été adopté lors de la conférence mondiale sur l'éducation des droits de l'homme et de la démocratie, réunie sous l'égide de l'Unesco à Montréal. Dans le monde arabe, ont été tenues de sembla-

bles conférences, appuyées par l'Institut arabe des droits de l'homme et en Jordanie aussi, la prise de conscience est réelle. Depuis le début de l'année, l'Association jordanienne des droits de l'homme propose des ateliers destinés aux enseignants des écoles et mis en œuvre avec la coopération d'organisations libanaises, de la Fondation Friedrich Nauman et soutenus par l'Union européenne. Le dernier atelier s'est déroulé la semaine dernière à Amman. Une trentaine de professeurs, hommes et femmes, sont venus discuter de la convention internationale des droits de l'enfant et des moyens d'introduire les principes et les valeurs des droits de l'homme, en général, dans les salles de classe. Afin de les promouvoir, les enseignants ont proposé la création de clubs des droits de l'homme en collaboration avec l'Association jordanienne. Ils n'auraient pas de mal à fonctionner, tant les élèves ne manquent pas d'idées intéressantes souvent étonnantes sur le sujet : à côté des classiques «liberté» et «savoir», les médicaments, la nourriture ou les habits sont aussi cités parmi les droits fondamentaux de l'homme. Une enseignante a même rapporté que, selon une de ses élèves, la



C'est dans les salles de classe d'aujourd'hui que se joue le respect à venir des droits de l'homme.

visite d'une amie était également un droit important.

Les enseignants de ce type de réunions comptent en réalité sur leur effet multiplicateur dans la mesure où chaque professeur est en contact privilégié avec au moins une centaine d'élèves. Cependant, les ateliers restent insuffisants pour toucher l'ensemble de la corporation enseignante. Les différentes associations qui mènent ce travail de sensibilisation envisagent de sortir un guide pour aider les professeurs à enseigner les droits de l'homme à leurs élèves, au mois de décembre prochain à l'occasion du cinquantenaire anniversaire de la Déclaration universelle des droits de l'homme.

Au total, cet investissement est risqué, sans garanties, mais permet à long terme d'espérer moins de violations et des êtres humains plus attachés aux droits, les leurs et ceux des autres.

Saleman Sweiss

La France et la Syrie sur la même longueur d'onde

Dans sa sélection hebdomadaire du 25 juillet, le *Monde* consacre une série d'articles aux résultats de la visite d'État du président syrien Hafez el-Assad en France. Selon la journaliste Mona Naim, «Dumas assouplit sa politique au Proche-Orient».

La visite n'aura pas été inutile, le président syrien «a déjà quelque peu fléchi sur deux points : l'idée franco-égyptienne d'une conférence multinationale pour sauver la paix et la nécessité de répondre dans les formes à la commission rogatoire française à propos du criminel nazi Alois Brunner», toujours protégé en Syrie.

«La Syrie prend la France pour tête de pont d'une offensive diplomatique», titre ailleurs le quotidien français. Pour le *Monde*, cette visite «traduit une volonté de valoriser le rôle de l'Europe dans la recherche de la paix au Proche-Orient», analyse le quotidien français. Enfin, selon Lucien George, «le temps où les Libanais auraient été inquiets et jaloux» de la visite du président syrien à Paris est révolu. Aujourd'hui cela les rassure plutôt de voir se développer des intérêts communs entre la Syrie et la France». Et le journaliste ajoute : «Aujourd'hui Paris a cessé de contrecarrer la Syrie au Liban et la Syrie lui reconnaît une position particulière dans ce pays».

Dans Arabies édition juillet-août, on trouvera un article très laudatif à l'égard de l'émir saoudien Saoud al-Faisal. Pendant 23 ans à la tête de la diplomatie de son pays, cet homme «du consensus arabe» selon le magazine, s'est révélé être «un personnage politique d'envergure et d'une haute tenue morale. Il est unanimement apprécié par ses homologues arabes, ses pairs occidentaux et ses divers interlocuteurs».



Chirac et Hafez el-Assad en pleine discussion.

Faisal : «L'émir s'est illustré par son action constante en faveur du rayonnement de son pays et de la défense des causes arabes et musulmanes».

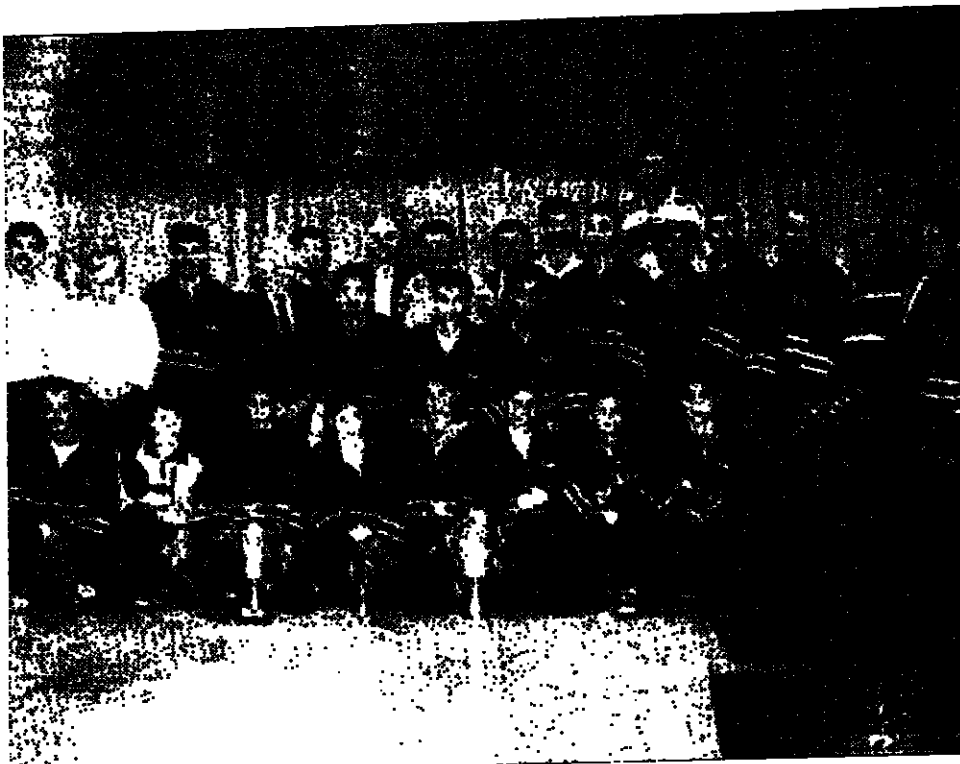
Revue de presse réalisée par Nahed Al-Khlouf

The Star

Stadium

Edited by Abdul Hamid Addasi

2nd Arab Taekwondo Championship Jordan takes first place with 13 medals



The Jordanian Taekwondo Team receive a hero's welcome on their return to Amman

Abdul Hamid Addasi
Special to The Star

THE JORDANIAN Taekwondo team returned this week from Rabat, after participating in the 2nd Arab Taekwondo Championship.

Ten Arab countries participated in the competition, and the Jordanian men's team took first place with an overall score of 61 points. Second place went to the Moroccan team, the host country, with a total of six medals: four gold, one silver and one bronze. The Jordanian women's team took second place, behind the Moroccan team with a total of seven medals: two gold, two silver and three bronze.

In the men's competition Jordan won four gold medals. The successful competitors were Ibrahim Aqeel in 54 kg division, Raed Naji in 58 kg division, Mohammed Abo Alrouz in 80kg division, and Mohammed Flah in 84kg division.

Jordan added a silver medal from Hussein Al Taleha in 78 kg division and a bronze medal by Hussein Mohammed in +84 kg division.

In the women's competitions Jordan won two gold medals by Alisar Mater in 51 kg division and Zaha Altahoni in 54 kg division. There were also two silver medals

by Nansi Alhindi in 59kg division, and Fatma Aisyad in 63kg division, and three bronze medals by Alaa Kutkut in 72 kg division, Ahlam Bino in 55kg division and Luna Fleifel in 67 kg division.

His Royal Highness Prince Hassan who supported this sport was honoured as the representing head of the Arabian Taekwondo Federation.



Sergei Bubka, the Russian pole vaulting legend, packs up his equipment—maybe for the last time—after his uncharacteristic early exit during the Goodwill Games in New York

US sets world record in 4x400m

UNIONDALE, New York—The United States men's 1,600-meter relay team, anchored by Michael Johnson, smashed the world record this week, clocking 2 minutes 54.20 seconds in the Goodwill Games.

Johnson, who came into the games as an uncertain quantity because of injuries over the past year, capped the relay with the fastest leg, 43.1 seconds. "I didn't want to let these guys down," he said. "They ran

great legs." Jerome Young led off the relay with a 44.4 leg, and was followed by his coach, Antonio Pettigrew in 43.2 and Tyree Washington in 43.5, before Johnson finished off the record run. They broke the record by .09 seconds—the previous mark of 2:54.29 by the US team, also anchored by Johnson, at the 1993 World Championships in Stuttgart, Germany.

"We wanted to come out here and do something special

for New York, the United States and the Goodwill Games," Pettigrew added.

US guns down Canada in 4x100m

For the second straight day, Maurice Greene ran away from Donovan Bailey down the stretch, this time in the men's 400-meter relay, as the US team beat archrival Canada with a time of 37.90 seconds, the fastest time in the world

this year and a Goodwill record. For a change, the Americans did not botch the handoffs, as the passes were clean from Jon Drummond to Tim Harden to Dennis Mitchell to Greene.

Bailey got the baton about a meter behind Greene, but did not have the speed to catch the world and Goodwill 100m champion, losing by nearly five meters. "Can't nobody beat us at home," Greene said. "The US is No. 1."



The U-18 Jordanian Women's Basketball team in triumphant mood after beating Syria 60-51 in the West Asian Championship, held in Amman this week

Arab Cup qualifiers: Penalty kick gives Jordan ticket to Doha

Amman (Star)—Jordan narrowly escaped elimination from the Arab Cup—which would have been the first time in its history—when Kuwaiti referee Saad Kamel gave Jordan a penalty kick in the last two minutes of the match against Palestine. Abdul Allah El-Shayab tied the score (1-1) to give Jordan a ticket to the finals, which will be held in Doha between 22-30 September.

Palestine played their best game of the tournament against Jordan, having previously lost to Lebanon 0-2 and to Syria 1-3. Their only chance for progressing further was to beat Jordan, and hope that the Syrians beat the Lebanese. The latter did in fact happen, as Syria beat Lebanon 1-0, but it was not enough for the Palestinian team.

Jordan lost its first match against Syria 0-3, but won its second against Lebanon 2-0, with goals scored by Badran El-Shakran and Bassam El-



The Jordan Football Squad

Khateeb. Jordan took second place behind Syria and advanced to the final stages with both Syria and Lebanon.

Incidentally, it was these three teams who gained the top three places during the Pan Arab Games held in Beirut last year. Twelve countries have qual-

ified for the finals. They are Kuwait, UAE, Sudan, Algeria or Libya, Syria, Jordan, Lebanon, Qatar, Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Tunisia and Morocco.

Former Iowa State coach inks five-year contract with Bulls

CHICAGO—The Chicago Bulls hired Tim Floyd as Director of Basketball Operations. Bulls Chairman Jerry Reinsdorf announced this week. "Our first priority has always been getting Michael Jordan back," Reinsdorf said. "Our second priority was to find a solid coach for the future. We talked with Tim Floyd about the coaching job. We all agreed that bringing Tim Floyd on board as Director of Basketball Operations would serve the best interest of the Bulls in the short-term and the long-term. Tim will become head coach at some future date. This allows him to get to work

immediately. But this also allows the Bulls flexibility to work with Michael if he chooses to continue playing basketball."

As Director of Basketball Operations, in the absence of a head coach, Floyd will work directly with the assistant coaches and Vice President of Basketball Operations Jerry Krause to prepare for the 1998-99 season. "I am pleased to join the Bulls and I look forward to the challenge of being head coach when the time is appropriate," said Floyd. "The Bulls have had one of the finest coaches in NBA history. They have some of the finest players in Scottie Pippen, Ron Harper, Dennis Rodman, Luc Longley, Steve Kerr, Toni Kukoc, Jud Buechler, Bill Wennington, Randy Brown, Joe Kleine, Scott Burrell, Dickey Simpkins, Rusty LaRue and Keith Booth. I look forward to working with all of them if the opportunity presents itself."

Reinsdorf said he and Krause interviewed many excellent candidates over the past several weeks. "I came away convinced that Tim Floyd is the best man for the job of the Bulls," said Reinsdorf. "We knew we had to hire a tough competitor. Someone who can deal with veterans or younger players. Someone who can adapt to win. Someone who respects players, respects fans, and respects the Bulls' tradition. We found that man in Tim Floyd. Tim has the character, the basketball knowledge, and the leadership that fits with a championship tradition."

Le Monde says 'Tour de France' discredited

CAP d'GDE, France—Riders showed their anger by starting last Friday's stage of the Tour de France two hours late, complaining that the use of performance-enhancing drugs was wrecking the sport.

Belgium's Tom Steels won the 137-mile stage from Tarascon-sur-Ariege to Cap d'Gde in southern France for his second Tour victory. The pack caught Jacky Durand of France near the finish with Steels capturing the sprint.

Laurent Jalabert was part of a long breakaway during the day with his brother Nicolas and Bart Voskamp of the Netherlands. The lead was up to five minutes at one point before the pack caught them.

Laurent Jalabert, the world's No. 1-ranked cyclist, was instrumental in the early protest and acted as a spokesman. "We are fed up with being treated like cattle. So we are going to behave like cattle," he told Radio Tour, the station that follows the race. "The sport is no longer interesting to anyone. We won't cycle and that's the end of it."

But after conferring with race officials, the 148 cyclists did hit the road. When the stage was over, Jan Ullrich still



Disgruntled Tour cyclists during their recent protest

had the overall lead, keeping a 71-second margin over American Bobby Julich.

Armin Meier of Switzerland became the first cyclist to publicly admit taking the banned

performance-enhancing substance EPO. He was a member of the Festina team that was thrown out of the race because of the scandal. Meier said on France Info radio that during

police questioning he had admitted to taking EPO.

"Yes, I said that I had taken EPO, how I took it and why I took it," he said, adding that "I'm just the victim of a system."

Meier refused to say if any of his teammates had also taken the banned substance, and he criticized the police treatment of riders during the interrogation. "I feel like a criminal. Each rider had two police officers. They put me under pressure for four or five hours. They took everything. I undressed. They could see all of me. I went into a cell with a wooden bed. But I feel better inside because I have told the truth. Perhaps it is good for the sport," he added.

Meier and all his Festina teammates were released after questioning. One of them, Richard Virenque, maintained throughout questioning that he had not taken illegal drugs.

In the northern city of Lille, Festina team director Bruno Roussel, team doctor Eric Ryckaert and physiotherapist Willy Voet, all under formal investigation into the affair gave their versions on the doping issue in a three-hour court session.

Tour organizers said that the Dutch TVM team, under suspicion for possible doping, would "be immediately expelled" from the competition if there was firm evidence against the team. Two TVM officials were being questioned this week.

The influential daily Le Monde called for an end to this year's race, contending it has become a meaningless contest. "Tour de France discredited," proclaimed Le Monde's front page headline. But Sports Minister Marie-Georget Buffet said the race must go on. "The Tour is seriously ill," she said. "But there's no reason to kill it."

Track and Field's farewell to JJK

EDWARDSVILLE, Illinois—Jackie Joyner-Kersey's great track and field career has come down to one meet, one event and she hopes one quiet celebration.

For all the adulation and accolades through the years, Joyner-Kersey does not seek attention. But on Saturday night her sport's spotlight falls on her one last time.

The meet, the US Open at Southern Illinois-Edwardsville, is an International Amateur Athletic Federation event, but is billed as "Track and Field's Farewell to JJK."

Seating capacity has been increased from about 3,500 to 10,000 to accommodate those who want to see Joyner-Kersey's hometown finale. Her resume includes six Olympic medals, including three golds. She also has four world titles, four Goodwill Games championships and 14 national events.

Most renowned for the heptathlon, Joyner-Kersey will be competing only in the long jump, the event in which she once held the world record and now is the American record holder. When the long jump is over and the meet completed, Joyner-Kersey will probably have difficulty holding back tears, just as she did Wednes-

day night at the Goodwill Games in Uniondale, N.Y., where she won her final heptathlon.

Her husband and coach, Bob Kersey, also cried after his wife's unexpected victory, her first heptathlon in two years, as she fought off rust, heat, fatigue and age. "I'm going to miss track and field, the competition and the cheers," Joyner-Kersey said after wiping away tears. "It's going to be tough for me, but whatever I can do to keep track and field going strong, I'm going to do it. It may not be on the track, but I'll be on the sidelines cheering and motivating people. I don't have to be on the track to help the sport."

Joyner-Kersey was overwhelmed by the wildly cheering crowd of more than 10,000 at the Mitchell Athletic Complex. "It was incredible with everyone embracing me," she said. "They did my heart some good."

The final embrace comes Saturday night. After the meet, nearby East St. Louis—where she was born 36 years ago—will honor her and her family and friends. East St. Louis Mayor Gordon Bush will proclaim Jackie Joyner-Kersey Day and present her with the

key to the city. The choir from Lincoln High, where she went to school, will perform. The track team from the school, which closed this year despite Joyner-Kersey's pleas, will join her on the field. So will several family members, including her brother, the 1984 Olympic triple jump champion, and her sister-in-law, Florence Griffith Joyner, the triple gold medalist at the 1988 Olympics and world record holder in the 100 and 200 meters. Local organizations will shower her with gifts.

Her biggest supporter through the years has been her husband, whom she married in 1986. "The moments of victory have been great, but watching her go through adversity, watching her struggle through tough times and keep that smile on her face, staying friendly, thinking positively, were uplifting. We're not losing a great athlete from track and field, we're losing a great person," Kersey said. "But I'm glad it's over."

There will be other great athletes on the field. But none will compare to Joyner-Kersey. "She was one in a million," former heptathlete Cindy Greiner said. "She was like Michael Jordan. You just couldn't beat her."

The Star
Jordan's political, economic
and cultural weekly
Online

<http://star.arabia.com>

THE STAR'S WORK COMPUTING & HIGH TECH

Edited by Zeid Nasser

Computer & IT companies!

Welcome to The Star's
Workstation, the absolute
source on what's hot and
what's not in
Jordan's IT market.
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or
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with your news and views.

The biggest information technology exhibition in the Middle East will attract 450 exhibitors from 32 countries: GITEX'98 is bigger!

GITEX'98 will showcase the
latest in computing and com-
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October to 2 November 1998.
The Dubai World Trade Centre
will be hosting the 18th Gulf
Information Technology Exhibi-
tion (GITEX'98). Con-
sidered to be the
key technology
event in the Mid-
dle East, Gitex'98
will be the largest
and most success-
ful IT exhibition
ever, with 450
exhibitors repre-
senting 1500 com-
panies from 32
countries, includ-
ing national pavilions
from the UK,
Egypt, Iran, Taiwan and Jordan.

the IT industry, but to the
entire business environment.
As the Gulf states and the
emerging markets in the Mid-
dle East continue to conceive
and implement new develop-
ment plans, the
demand for the lat-
est information
technology is con-
tinuously on the
rise and will
remain buoyant for
the foreseeable
future.



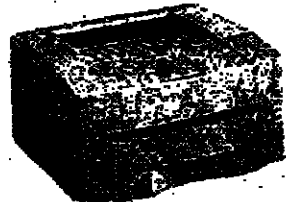
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hardware, software
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publishing, office
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media, multilingual ap-
plications, networking and business
communication, on-line infor-
mation services, mobile com-
puting, power systems, office
systems, as well as mainframe
and storage technology. It will
also feature office technology
products and accessories,
security services/ card technol-
ogy, financial and money hand-
ling hardware/software, com-

puter graphics, constancy and
training, peripherals, voice mes-
saging, digital imaging & infor-
mation managing, personal
computers/shares, PCs, Internet
products, production and
authoring tools, CD-ROM
titles, browsers, web servers,
Internet service providers and
web mastering products.

Gitex'98 will comprise the
following sections: Print Tech-
nology, Document Management
and Office Automation (Hall 1),
Computer Hardware and Acces-
sories (Hall 2), Software, Hard-
ware and Accessories (Halls
3&4), Oracle Open World (Hall
5A), Software Pavilion and
National Pavilions (Hall 5),
Networking & Communication
(Hall 6) and Computer Shopper,
the retail section of the show
(Halls 7 and 7A). Computer
Shopper has doubled in size this
year, as a marquee will be spe-
cially added to meet the ever
increasing demand for exhibi-
tion space.

Two major conferences are
planned to run alongside
Gitex'98: the Datamatrix-
Aberdeen Group Conference
and Oracle Middle East Con-
ference. In addition, more than

100 technical seminars will be
presented by exhibitors during
the five days of the show.
Gitex'97 attracted more
than 47,000 registered trade
visitors from 99 countries, and
91,500 visitors for its retail
partner, the Computer Shop-
per'97. The resounding suc-
cess of Gitex'97 in terms of
the number and quality of visi-
tors from around the globe is
evidence that Dubai is a major
IT hub, not only for the Middle
East, but for Africa, the CIS
and South West Asia as well.



Xerox DocuPrint 4508
As part of Xerox's aim to
truly become 'the document
company', it has launched a
series of advanced laser print-
ers for single, multi or network
users.
In the lower-end, there is an
impressive laser printer called
the Xerox DocuPrint 4508.
This is a 600 dots per inch
(dpi) printer, offering a print-
ing speed of 8 pages per min-
ute.
The DocuPrint 4508 can be
used to print on a variety of
materials including transpa-
rency, labels, envelopes, and
its drawer can take up to 250
sheets.
It comes with 2 MB RAM,
expandable to 34 MB, and
works with Windows 3.1, 95
and OS/2; it also includes
forty-five fonts.
Additionally, the DocuPrint
is offered for a very attractive
price of JD595.
For more information, con-
tact Arab Office Automation
(AOA) on telephone 5698804.

Acer introduces Extensa 710 notebook series



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A vital feature of the Acer
Extensa 710 is its NSTL certi-
fication as Year 2000 compli-
ant. Incorporating an Acer
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byte to 2000 from 1999. This
notebook will both computer
date specific data and avoid
year 2000 related software or
system failures. The Extensa
710 also offers integrated man-
agement solutions for corporate
users. It is Desktop Man-
agement Interface (DMI) com-
patible, allowing system adminis-
trators to monitor and update,
even on local area networks
(LAN), through such applica-
tions as Intel's LandDesk Client
Manager. Acer's latest note-
book also offers the versatility
of desktop PC equivalence
through an optional Acer Dock-
Mate V.

News update

Tekram provides a complete
video conferencing solution
that also includes Internet and
email features. It is called
How-R-L.
The package allows Internet
phone calls across the Internet
and introduces users to easy
conferencing.
By utilizing advanced com-
pression techniques, digitized
video can be attached and sent
via email, which can be viewed
without losing image and
sound quality.
Tekram products are avail-
able at Jordan Micro-Tech, who
can be contacted on telephone
5690660.



Pentium II, breaks the 'mould'

Intel's new upgrade standard set by Intel Pentium
II has produced the Socket 7 standard, used in mil-
lions of PCs. This is due to the radically
different physical dimensions of the Pentium II
processor, which is housed in a black cartridge.
The cartridge is slid into a socket. The upgrade
standard set to fragment even further, due to
the fact that Intel's competitors (AMD and Cyrix)
are producing their own upgrade standards.



INTERFACE BY ZEID NASSER

Migration of tech-brains

IT IS the age of the tech-brain migration from Jordan to
the Gulf, and it's taking its toll on computer and infor-
mation technology companies in the country.
Some of Jordan's top talents in both technical aspects
and marketing are finding excellent job opportunities in
Gulf States, mainly the United Arab Emirates and Qatar.
Of course, this is perfectly normal, considering that the
salaries offered abroad are at least three times as much!
No matter how much more expensive the cost of living is,
these salaries remain very attractive. In many cases, there
are also a number of other benefits.
So, how is this affecting Jordan's computer market?
Well, it has resulted in a loss of mature talents, in the
sense that computer sector professionals begin to peak in
their productivity and creativity around 3 to 5 years after
they start working. It is about that time that they also qual-
ify for jobs abroad.
Speaking of this whole issue brings to mind the gains
made by Jordan's computer sector in the early nineties,
when thousands of computer and information technology
specialists arrived from Kuwait.
Looking back, it is quite obvious that they contributed
to the development and expansion of information technol-
ogy utilization in Jordan.
The current waves of expatriates in the computer field
are younger and more promising. In a way, new horizons
open up to them, upon entering bigger information tech-
nology markets: maybe they can better unleash their abili-
ties abroad?
What we need to do is to find the positive aspects of
this wave of migration. Surely, in the long-run their must
be some benefits, to eventually neutralize the disadvan-
tages to Jordan's computer industry.

Pentium 233MHz below JD 500!

Well, it was expected that the price of Pentium 233MHz
system would continue to drop, but the most recent prices
advertised by distributors seem quite incredible!
A number of distributors are offering 233MHz Pentium
PCs, complete with 32 MB RAM, and 2.5 GB hard disk
for as little as JD 480.
What's more, the price of add-ons and peripherals is
also dropping. Nowadays, you can get a 56 Kbps modem
for around JD 65, and a color ink-jet printer for around JD
175.
All in all, you'll have a well-specified PC complete
worth printer and modem for around JD 700 - JD 750.
At \$1,000 that's almost as low as the lowest priced PC
package in the United States. That should be a point for
many people to dwell on, especially if they used to think
that the price of technology in Jordan was a barrier!
In any case, it looks like PCs are heading fast into the
domain of home appliances, getting closer to them in price
and becoming easier to use and install.
All in one systems, for under \$ 1,000, will make the
predication of the "PC as a home appliance" come true,
within a few years.

Creativity encouraged at CYBER kids

By Zeid Nasser
Star Staff Writer

WHEN YOU read the word 'cy-
ber', you will probably think of
computers. But there is more to
the word than meets the eye—it
can mean the science of commu-
nications.

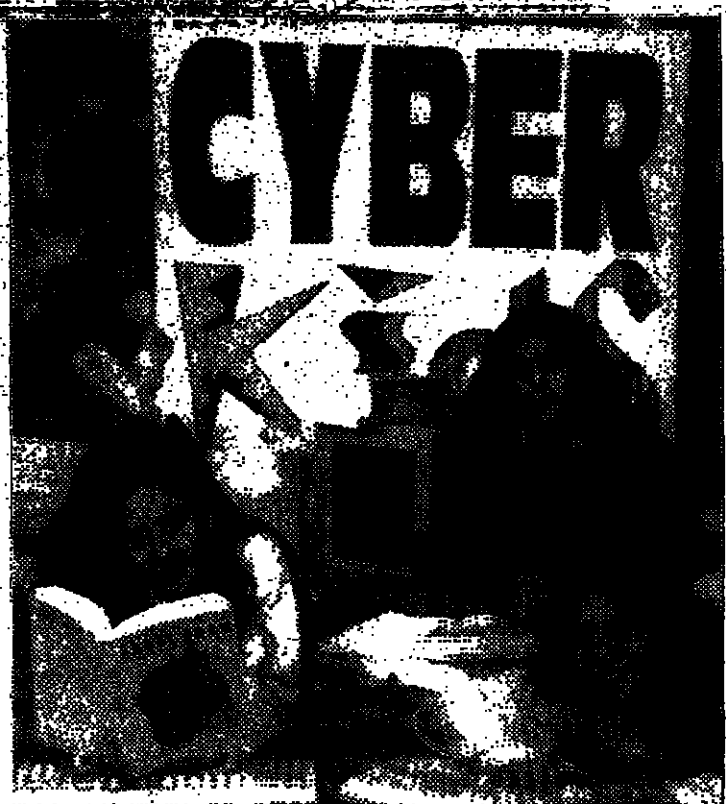
Today's citizens are required
to know, master and use infor-
mation technology in their everyday
life. Put simply, if you want to
progress in today's world, you
must be familiar with computers.

With this in mind, a new center
was opened—CYBER kids—
earlier this month in Amman.
The center, a branch of an inter-
national franchise chain in Cy-
prus, aims to educate future gen-
erations in the use of computer
technology.

"Our main goal is to ensure
that computer studies are intro-
duced into the educational curricu-
lum at an earlier age—to en-
hance the talents of today's youth
and to make learning more enjoy-
able," Abia Zareikat, director of
the center, told The Star. She
said that CYBER kids was estab-
lished for children to develop
their psycho-emotional world.

This educational innovation was
first implemented in Cyprus in
1992, as part of a franchised edu-
cational system. The center's
encompass the latest tech-
nology and media skills. The
curriculum used at CYBER kids is
the result of research studies (un-
dertaken in universities around
the world), which identified to-
day's educational requirements.
The research was given interna-
tional recognition during Ameri-
ca's largest invention show, IN-
PEX 1995, and has since been
implemented in many countries.
The Amman branch, which is in
Abdoun, was set up last June,
and gained full recognition from
the parent company on 4 July.

Today, the CYBER kids chain
has 30 centers in Greece. A strat-
egical plan for globalization is al-
ready underway. The company is
aware that the global market for a



multi-national computer educa-
tion franchiser is vast, and they
are expecting tough competition
from many companies eager to
enter into the market.

CYBER kids was formed for
children between the ages of 5
and 15. A seven-level program is
divided according to different age
groups. The first two levels, Mi-
nors (A/B), from ages 5 to 9, fo-
cuses on enhancing creativity,
imagination and critical thinking.
The third and fourth levels, Ju-
niors (A/B), from ages 9 to 13,
aims to develop problem-solving
skills in a fun and friendly atmo-
sphere. Finally, the child enters
what is known as the Senior level
(A/B/C)—a career oriented level
which develops research and
problem-solving skills.

This is a revolutionary method.
What is offered
at CYBER kids
is a key to a
new and mod-
ern way of
thinking. The
center, is a
high-tech, well
studied out-
program that
develops and
prepares the
child for the
21st Century.
"Each pupil
has the right to
discuss any
matter with his
friends or his
teachers—we
aim to moti-
vate and stimu-
late the child,"
Ms Randa Sa-
heb, a teacher
at the center,

told The Star. As well as group
projects undertaken during class
hours, the children are encour-
aged to participate in social extra-
curricular events within cyber so-
cieties home and abroad.

All the teaching staff are re-
gulated and must meet the required
level of IT education—a univer-
sity degree with some practical
experience with computers are
the bare minimum. Excellent
communication skills are a pre-
requisite.

The children themselves must
undertake a screening process as
well; age, needs, capabilities and
degree of maturity are taken into
account. The class-sizes are
kept small on purpose—between
four and eight children in each
class—to allow for greater per-
sonal tuition. The classes are
graded, depending on the afore-
mentioned parameters of the
child.

The Amman branch is current-
ly running a summer intensive
course—six days a week, two
hours each session. Less inten-
sive courses are planned for the
Winter and Spring terms, with
classes twice a week. The fees
are JD50 per month.

"We encourage the children to
discuss and to find solutions to
some of the today's general is-
sues (pollution, for instance); we
like them to use their imagina-
tion and to be creative," Ms Sa-
heb told The Star. She ex-
plained that the center aims to
create a friendly, informal at-
mosphere; one where the chil-
dren are free to express them-
selves.

"The computer is an obedient
servant to the desires and inter-
ests of today's child," she said.

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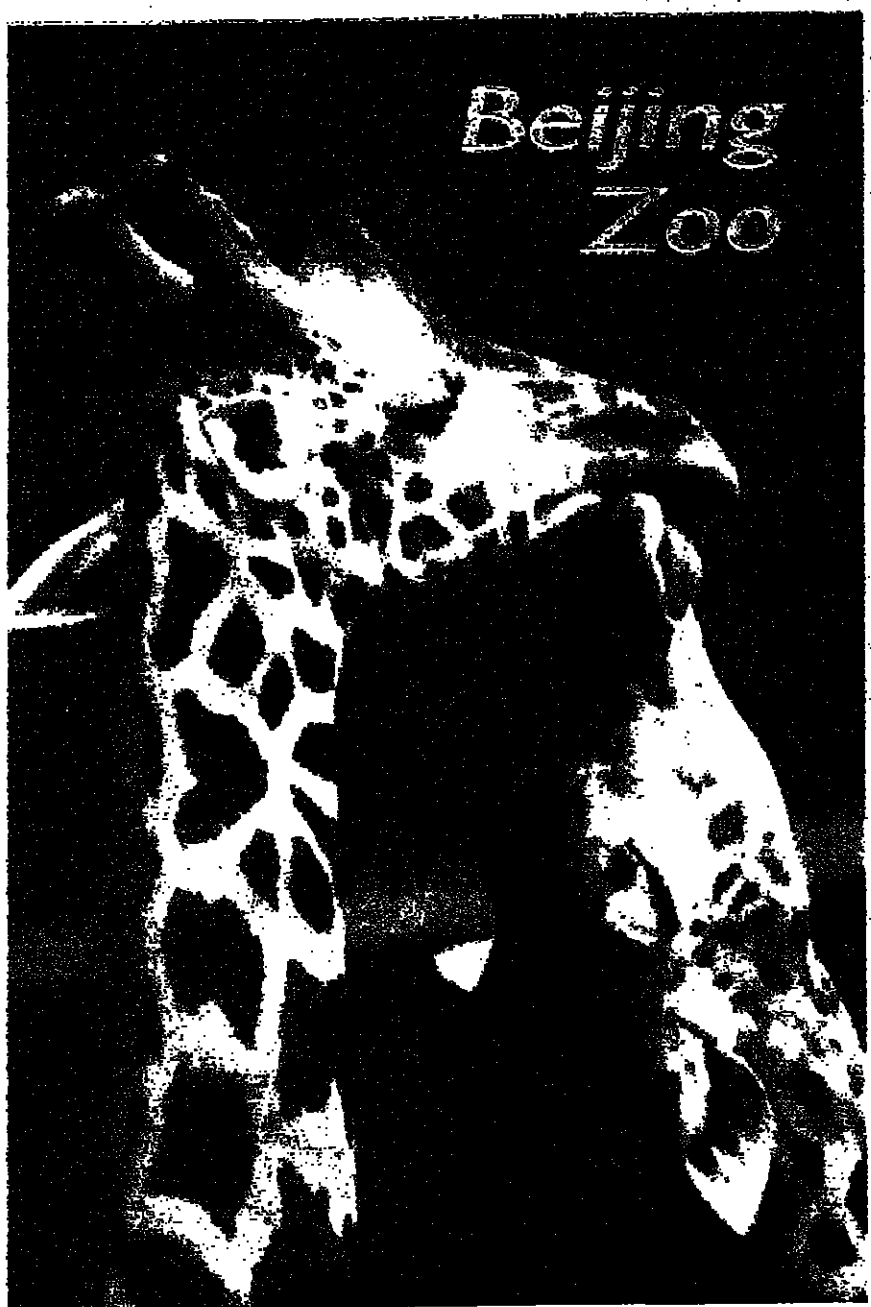
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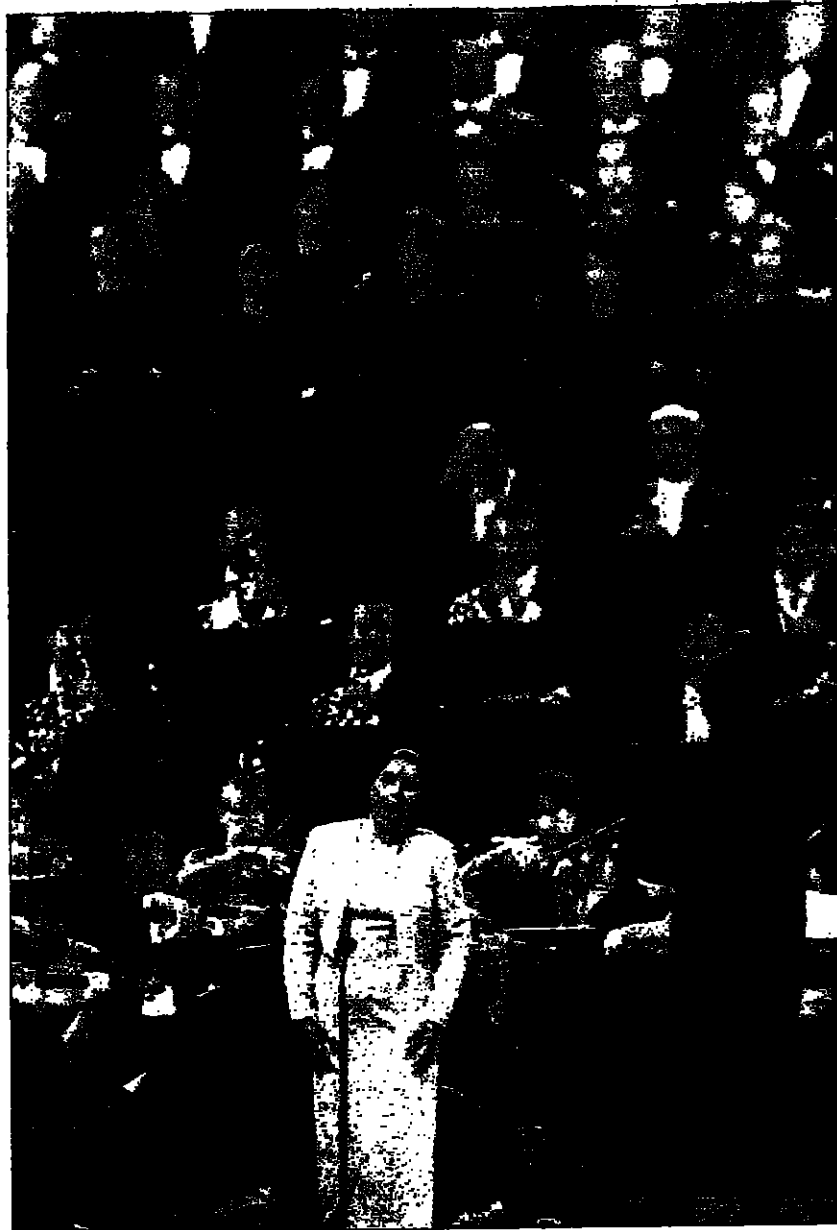
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Beijing Zoo
Two giraffes nuzzle each other upon being reunited after spending the night in separate cages at the Beijing Zoo 28 July. The capital's zoo was once a Ming Dynasty garden, which was converted in 1908. Today the zoo contains more than 400 species and is the largest in China.



Photos from Reuters



LEBANON CONCERT

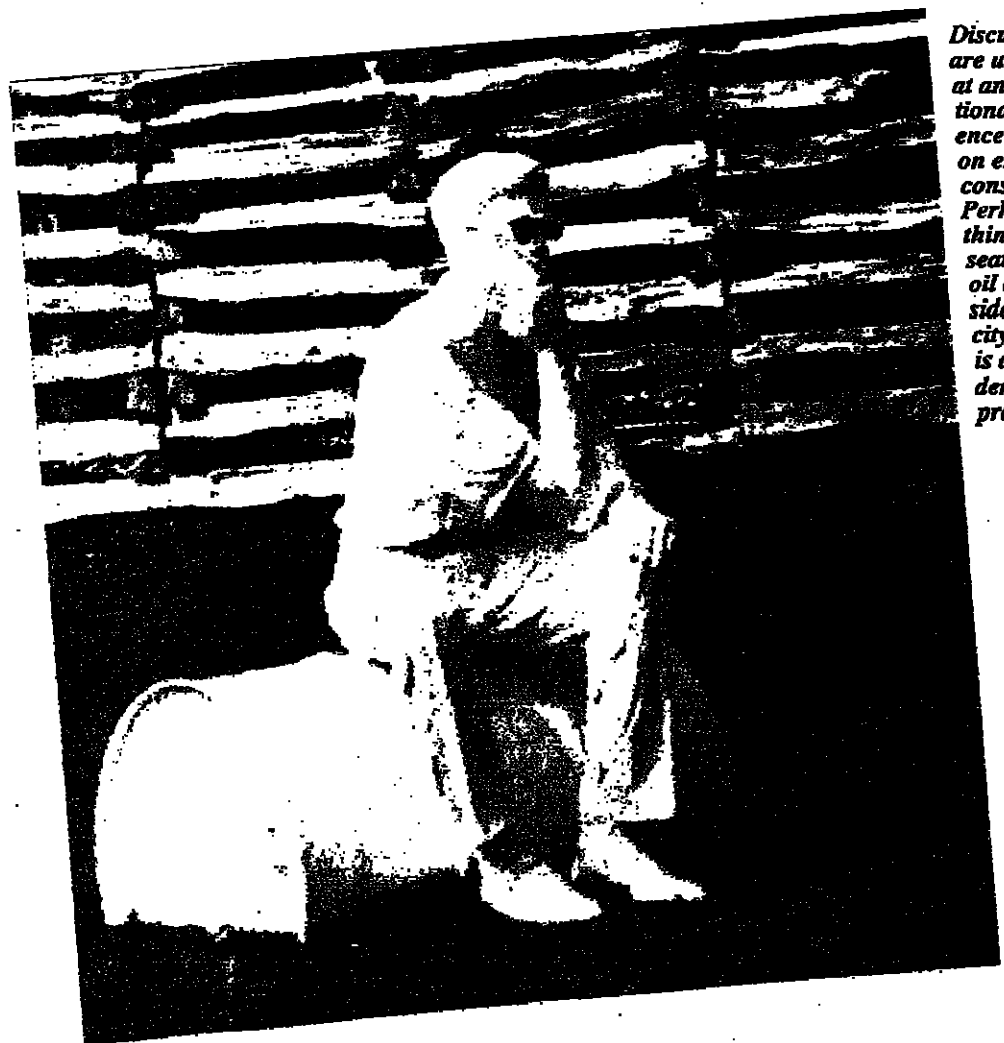
Italian conductor, Riccardo Muti (foreground left) leads his orchestra La Scala di Milano, as soprano Barbara Fritsch sings during a concert held at the Forum de Beyrouth 26 July. Muti is in Lebanon for the first time since the civil war ended in 1990.



Mongolians women wear traditional dress at the opening ceremony of their national Naadam festival. The festival is a colorful and chaotic pageant celebrating the three "manly sports" of wrestling, archery and horse racing. There is also a public carnival on the streets and grasslands close to the capital where thousands gather to enjoy the festivities for several days.

PREMIERE

Actresses Janet Leigh and daughter Jamie Lee Curtis, stars of the horror film "Halloween H20" pose together at the film's premier 27 July in Los Angeles. Twenty years ago, Curtis starred in "Halloween" as Laurie Strode. She plays the role in the latest sequel "Halloween: H20" which opens in the U.S. on 5 August.



Discussions are underway at an international conference in Basel on energy conservation. Perhaps his thinker, seated on an oil drum outside the city's station is also pondering the problem.



The C
Jordan
and

Political
needed
nation

In
to

Large Israel
program